



NOTES

UPON THE
TWELVE BOOKS
OF

Milton's Paradise Lost.

Collected from the SPECTATOR.

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NOTES

Upon the Twelve Books of

Milton's Paradise Lost.

SPECTATOR, N^o. 267.

Cedite Romani Scriptores, cedite Graii. Propert.



HERE is Nothing in Nature more irksome than general Discourses, especially when they turn chiefly upon Words. For this Reason I shall wave the Discussion of that Point which was started some Years since, Whether *Milton's Paradise Lost* may be called an *Heroic Poem*? Those who will not give it that Title, may call it (if they please) a *Divine Poem*. It will be sufficient to its Perfection, if it has in it all the Beauties of the highest Kind of Poetry; and as for those who alledge it is not an Heroick Poem, they advance no more to the Diminution of it, than if they should say *Adam* is not *Aeneas*, nor *Eve Helen*.

I shall therefore examine it by the Rules of Epic Poetry, and see whether it falls short of the *Iliad* or *Aeneid*, in the Beauties which are essential to that Kind of Writing. The first Thing to be consider'd in an Epic Poem, is the Fable, which is perfect or imperfect, according as the Action which it relates is more or less so. This Action should have three Qualifications in it. First, It should be but one Action. Secondly, It should be an Entire Action; and Thirdly, It should be a great Action. To consider the Action of the *Iliad*, *Aeneid*, and *Paradise Lost*, in these three several Lights. *Homer* to preserve the Unity of his Action hastens into the Midst of Things, as *Horace* has observed: Had he gone up to *Leda's* Egg, or begun much later, even at the Rape of *Helen*, or the Investing of *Troy*, it is manifest that the Story of the Poem would have been a Series of several Actions. He therefore opens his Poem with the Discord of his Princes, and artfully interweaves, in the several succeeding Parts of it, an Account of every Thing material which relates to them, and had passed before this fatal Dissension. After the same Manner, *Aeneas* makes his first Appearance in the *Tyrrhene* Seas, and within the Sight of *Italy*, because the Action proposed to be celebrated was that of his settling himself in *Latium*. But because it was necessary for the Reader to know what had happened to him in the taking of *Troy*, and in the preceding Parts of his Voyage, *Virgil* makes his Heroe relate it by Way of Episode in the second and third Books of the *Aeneid*: the Contents of both which Books come before those of the first Book in the Thread of the Story, tho' for preserving of this Unity of Action, they follow it in the Disposition of the Poem. *Milton*, in Imitation of these two great Poets, opens his *Paradise Lost* with an infernal Council plotting the Fall of Man; which is the Action he proposed to celebrate; and as for those Great Actions, the Battle of the Angels, and the Creation of the World, (which preceded in Point of Time, and which, in my Opinion, would have entirely destroyed the Unity of his Principal Action, had he related them in the same Order that they happened) he cast
them

them into the fifth, sixth and seventh Books, by Way of Episode to this noble Poem. *Vid. the End of Spectator 327.*

ARISTOTLE himself allows, that *Homer* has nothing to boast of as to the Unity of his Fable, tho' at the same Time that great Critick and Philosopher endeavours to palliate this Imperfection in the *Greek* Poet, by imputing it in some Measure to the very Nature of an Epic Poem. Some have been of Opinion, that the *Aeneid* also labours in this Particular, and has Episodes which may be looked upon as Excrescencies rather than as Parts of the Action. On the contrary, the Poem, which we have now under our Consideration, hath no other Episodes than such as naturally arise from the Subject, and yet is filled with such a Multitude of astonishing Incidents, that it gives us at the same Time a Pleasure of the greatest Variety, and of the greatest Simplicity; uniform in its Nature, tho' diversified in the Execution.

I must observe also, that as *Virgil* in the Poem which was designed to celebrate the Original of the *Roman* Empire, has described the Birth of its great Rival, the *Carthaginian* Commonwealth: *Milton* with the like Art in his Poem on the Fall of Man, has related the Fall of those Angels who are his professed Enemies. Besides the many other Beauties in such an Episode, its running parallel with the great Action of the Poem, hinders it from breaking the Unity so much as another Episode would have done, that had not so great an Affinity with the principal Subject. In short, this is the same Kind of Beauty which the Criticks admire in the *Spanish Friar*, or the *Double Discovery*, where the two different Plots looks like Counterparts and Copies of one another.

THE second Qualification required in the Action of an Epic Poem is, that it should be an *entire* Action: An Action is entire when it is complete in all its Parts; or, as *Aristotle* describes it, when it consists of a Beginning, a Middle, and an End. Nothing should go before it, be intermix'd with it, or follow after it, that is not related to it. As on the contrary, no single Step should be omitted in that just and regular Progress which it must be supposed

posed to take from its Original to its Consummation. Thus we see the Anger of *Achilles* in his Birth, its Continuance, and Effects; and *Aeneas's* Settlement in *Italy*, carried on through all the Oppositions in his Way to it both by Sea and Land. The Action in *Milton* excels (I think) both the former in this Particular; we see it contrived in Hell, executed upon Earth, and punished by Heaven. The Parts of it are told in the most distinct Manner, and grow out of one another in the most natural Order.

THE third Qualification of an Epic Poem is its Greatness. The Anger of *Achilles* was of such Consequence, that it embroiled the Kings of *Greece*, destroyed the Heroes of *Asia*, and engaged all the Gods in Factions. *Aeneas's* Settlement in *Italy* produced the *Cæsars*, and gave Birth to the *Roman* Empire. *Milton's* Subject was still greater than either of the former; it does not determine the Fate of single Persons or Nations, but of a whole Species. The United Powers of Hell are joined together for the Destruction of Mankind, which they effected in Part, and would have completed, had not Omnipotence it self interposed. The principal Actors are Man in his greatest Perfection, and Woman in her highest Beauty. Their Enemies are the fallen Angels: The Messiah their Friend, and the Almighty their Protector. In short, every Thing that is great in the whole Circle of Being, whether within the Verge of Nature, or out of it, has a proper Part assigned it in this admirable Poem.

In Poetry, as in Architecture, not only the Whole, but the principal Members, and every Part of them, should be Great. I will not presume to say, that the Book of Games in the *Æneid*, or that in the *Iliad*, are not of this Nature, nor to reprehend *Virgil's* Simile of the Top, and many other of the same Kind in the *Iliad*, as liable to any Censure in this Particular; but I think We may say, without derogating from those wonderful Performances, that there is an Indisputable and Unquestioned Magnificence in every Part of *Paradise Lost*, and indeed a much greater than could have been formed upon any Pagan System.

BUT *Aristotle*, by the Greatness of the Action, does not only mean that it should be great in its Nature, but also

also in its Duration; or in other Words, That it should have a due Length in it, as well as what we properly call Greatness. The just Measure of this Kind of Magnitude, he explains by the following Similitude. An Animal, no bigger than a Mite, cannot appear perfect to the Eye, because the Sight takes it in at once, and has only a confused Idea of the Whole, and not a distinct Idea of all its Parts: If on the contrary, you should suppose an Animal of ten thousand Furlongs in Length, the Eye would be so filled with a single Part of it, that it could not give the Mind an Idea of the whole. What these Animals are to the Eye, a very short or a very long Action would be to the Memory. The first would be, as it were, lost and swallowed up by it, and the other difficult to be contained in it. *Homer* and *Virgil* have shewn their principal Art in this Particular; the Action of the *Iliad*, and that of the *Aeneid*, were in themselves exceeding short, but are so beautifully extended and diversified by the Invention of *Episodes*, and the Machinery of Gods, with the like poetical Ornaments, that they make up an agreeable Story sufficient to employ the Memory without overcharging it. *Milton's* Action is enriched with such a Variety of Circumstances, that I have taken as much Pleasure in reading the Contents of his Books, as in the best invented Story I ever met with. It is possible, that the Traditions, on which the *Iliad* and *Aeneid* were built, had more Circumstances in them than the History of *the Fall of Man*, as it is related in Scripture. Besides it was easier for *Homer* and *Virgil* to dash the Truth with Fiction, as they were in no Danger of offending the Religion of their Country by it. But as for *Milton*, he had not only a very few Circumstances upon which to raise his Poem, but was also obliged to proceed with the greatest Caution in every Thing that he added out of his own Invention. And, indeed, notwithstanding all the Restraints he was under, he has filled his Story with so many surprising Incidents, which bear so close Analogy with what is delivered in Holy Writ, that it is capable of pleasing the most delicate Reader, without giving Offence to the most scrupulous.

THE modern Criticks have collected from several
Hints

Hints in the *Iliad* and *Aeneid* the Space of Time, which is taken up by the Action of each of those Poems; but as a great Part of *Milton's* Story was transacted in Regions that lie out of the Reach of the Sun and the Sphere of Day, it is impossible to gratify the Reader with such a Calculation, which indeed would be more curious than instructive; None of the Criticks, either Ancient or Modern, having

Vid. Spect.
308.

laid down Rules to circumscribe the Action of an Epic Poem with any Determined Number of Years, Days, or Hours.

But of this more particular hereafter.



SPECTATOR. No 273.

Notandi sunt tibi Mores.

Hor.

HAVING examined the Action of *Paradise Lost*, let us in the next Place consider the Actors. This is *Aristotle's* Method of considering; first the Fable, and secondly the Manners, or as we generally call them in *English*, the Fable and the Characters.

HOMER has excelled all the Heroic Poets that ever wrote, in the Multitude and Variety of his Characters. Every God that is admitted into his Poem, acts a Part which would have been suitable to no other Deity. His Princes are as much distinguished by their Manners as by their Dominions; and even those among them, whose Characters seem wholly made up of Courage, differ from one another as to the particular Kinds of Courage in which they excel. In short, there is scarce a Speech or Action in the *Iliad*, which the Reader may not ascribe to the Person that speaks or acts, without seeing his Name at the Head of it.

HOMER does not only out-shine all other Poets in the Variety,

Variety, but also in the Novelty of his Characters. He has introduced among his *Grecian* Princes a Person, who had lived in three Ages of Men, and conversed with *Theseus*, *Hercules*, *Polyphemus*, and the first Race of Heroes. His principal Actor is the Son of a Goddess, not to mention the Offspring of other Deities, who have likewise a Place in his Poem, and the venerable *Trojan* Prince who was the Father of so many Kings and Heroes. There is in these several Characters of *Homer*, a certain Dignity as well as Novelty, which adapts them in a more peculiar Manner to the Nature of an heroic Poem. Tho' at the same time, to give them the greater Variety, he has described a *Vulcan*, that is, a Buffoon among his Gods, and a *Thersites* among his Mortals.

VIRGIL falls infinitely short of *Homer* in the Characters of his Poem, both as to their Variety and Novelty. *Aeneas* is indeed a perfect Character, but as for *Achates*, tho' he is stiled the Heroe's Friend, he does nothing in the whole Poem which may deserve that Title. *Gyas*, *Mnestheus*, *Sergestus*, and *Cloanthus*, are all Men of the same Stamp and Character.

—*fortemque Gyan, fortemque Cloanthum.*

Virg.

T H E R E are indeed several very natural Incidents in the Part of *Ascanius*; as that of *Dido* cannot be sufficiently admired. I do not see any Thing new or particular in *Turnus*. *Pallas* and *Evander* are remote Copies of *Heſtor* and *Priam*, as *Lausus* and *Mexentius* are almost Parallels to *Pallas* and *Evander*. The Characters of *Nisus* and *Eurialus* are beautiful, but common. We must not forget the Parts of *Sinon*, *Camilla*, and some few others, which are fine Improvements on the Greek Poet. In short, there is neither that Variety nor Novelty in the Persons of the *Aeneid*, which we meet with in those of the *Iliad*.

I F we look into the Characters of *Milton*, we shall find that he has introduced all the Variety his Fable was capable of receiving. The whole Species of Mankind was in two Persons at the Time to which the Subject of his

his Poem is confined. We have, however, four distinct Characters in these two Persons. We see Man and Woman in the highest Innocence and Perfection, and in the most abject State of Guilt and Infirmary. The two last Characters are, indeed, very common and obvious, but the two first are not only more magnificent, but more new than any Characters either in *Virgil* or *Homer*, or indeed in the whole Circle of Nature.

MILTON was so sensible of this Defect in the Subject of his Poem, and of the few Characters it would afford him, that he has brought into it two Actors of a shadowy and fictitious Nature, in the Persons of Sin and Death, by which Means he has wrought into the Body of his Fable a very beautiful and well invented Allegory. But notwithstanding the *Vid. Spect.* Fineness of this Allegory may atone for it 279.

in some Measure; I cannot think that Persons of such a chimerical Existence are proper Actors in an Epic Poem; because there is not that Measure of Probability annexed to them, which is requisite in Writings of this Kind, as I shall shew more at large hereafter.

VIRGIL has, indeed, admitted *Fame* as an Actress in the *Æneid*, but the Part she acts is very short, and none of the most admired Circumstances in that Divine Work. We find in Mock-Heroick Poems, particularly in the *Dispensary* and the *Lutrin*, several allegorical Persons of this Nature, which are very beautiful in those Compositions, and may, perhaps, be used as an Argument, that the Authors of them were of Opinion, such Characters might have a Place in an Epic Work. For my own Part, I should be glad the Reader would think so, for the Sake of the Poem I am now examining, and must further add, that if such empty unsubstantial Beings may be ever made use of on this Occasion, never were any more nicely imagined, and employed in more proper Actions, than those of which I am now speaking.

ANOTHER principal Actor in this Poem is the great Enemy of Mankind. The Part of *Ulysses* in *Homer's Odyssey* is very much admired by *Aristotle*, as perplexing

perplexing that Fable with very agreeable Plots and Intricacies, not only by the many Adventures in his Voyage, and the Subtilty of his Behaviour, but by the various Concealments and Discoveries of his Person in several Parts of that Poem. But the crafty Being I have now mentioned, makes a much longer Voyage than *Ulysses*, puts in Practice many more Wiles and Stratagems, and hides himself under a greater Variety of Shapes and Appearances, all of which are severally detected, to the great Delight and Surprize of the Reader.

WE may likewise observe with how much Art the Poet has varied several Characters of the Persons that speak in his infernal Assembly. On the contrary, how has he represented the whole Godhead exerting itself towards Man in its full Benevolence under the Threefold Distinction of a Creator, a Redeemer, and a Comforter !

NOR must we omit the Person of *Raphael*, who, amidst his Tendernefs and Friendship for Man, shews such a Dignity and Condescension in all his Speech and Behaviour, as are suitable to a superior Nature. The Angels are indeed as much diversified in *Milton*, and distinguished by their proper Parts, as the Gods are in *Homer* or *Virgil*. The Reader will find nothing ascribed to *Uriel*, *Gabriel*, *Michael*, or *Raphael*, which is not in a particular manner suitable to their respective Characters.

THERE is another Circumstance in the principal Actors of the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*, which gives a peculiar Beauty to those two Poems, and was therefore contrived with very great Judgment. I mean the Authors having chosen for their Heroes Persons who were so nearly related to the People for whom they wrote. *Achilles* was a Greek, and *Aeneas* the remote Founder of *Rome*. By this Means their Countrymen (whom they principally proposed to themselves for their Readers) were particularly attentive to all the Parts of their Story, and sympathized with their Heroes in all their Adventures. A Roman could not but rejoice in the Escapes, Successes, and Victories of *Aeneas*, and be grieved at any Defeats, Misfortunes, or Disappointments that befel him ; as a Greek must have had

had the same Regard for *Achilles*. And it is plain, that each of those Poems have lost this great-Advantage, among those Readers to whom their Heroes are as Strangers, or indifferent Persons.

MILTON's Poem is admirable in this respect, since it is impossible for any of its Readers, whatever Nation, Country or People he may belong to, not to be related to the Persons who are the principal Actors in it; but what is still infinitely more to its Advantage, the principal Actors in this Poem are not only our Progenitors, but our Representatives. We have an actual Interest in every Thing they do, and no less than our utmost Happiness is concerned, and lies at Stake in all their Behaviour.

I shall subjoin as a Corollary to the foregoing Remark, an admirable Observation out of *Aristotle*, which hath been very much misrepresented in the Quotations of some Modern Criticks. 'If a Man of perfect and consummate Virtue falls into a Misfortune, it raises our Pity, but not our Terror, because we do not fear that it may be our own Case, who do not resemble the suffering Person. But as the great Philosopher adds, 'If we see a Man of Virtue, mixt with Infirmities, fall into any Misfortune, it does not only raise our Pity but our Terror; because we are afraid that the like Misfortunes may happen to our selves, who resemble the Character of the suffering Person.

I shall only remark in this Place, that the foregoing Observation of *Aristotle*, tho' it may be true in other Occasions, does not hold in this; because in the present Case, though the Persons who fall into any Misfortune are of the most perfect and consummate Virtue, it is not to be considered as what may possibly be, but what actually is our own Case; since we are embark'd with them on the same Bottom, and must be Partakers of their Happiness or Misery.

IN this, and some other very few Instances, *Aristotle*'s Rules for Epic Poetry (which he had drawn from his Reflexions upon *Homer*) cannot be supposed to square exactly with the heroic Poems which have been made

since

since his Time ; since it is evident to every impartial Judge his Rules would still have been more perfect, could he have perused the *Aeneid*, which was made some hundred Years after his Death.

IN my next, I shall go through other Parts of *Milton's* Poem ; and hope that what I shall there advance, as well as what I have already written, will not only serve as a Comment upon *Milton*, but upon *Aristotle*.



SPECTATOR, No 279.

Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique. Hor.

WE have already taken a general Survey of the Fable and Characters in *Milton's Paradise Lost* : The Parts which remain to be consider'd, according to *Aristotle's* Method, are the *Sentiments* and the *Language*. Before I enter upon the first of these, I must advertise my Reader, that it is my Design as soon as I have finished my general Reflexions on these four several Heads, to give particular Instances out of the Poem now before us of Beauties and Imperfections which may be observed under each of them, as also of such other Particulars as may not properly fall under any of them. This I thought fit to premise, that the Reader may not judge too hastily of this Piece of Criticism, or look upon it as imperfect, before he has seen the whole Extent of it.

THE Sentiments in an Epic Poem are the Thoughts and Behaviour which the Author ascribes to the Persons whom he introduces, and are *just* when they are conformable to the Characters of the several Persons. The Sentiments have likewise a Relation to *Things* as well as *Persons*, and are then perfect when they are such as are adapted to the Subject. If in either of

these Cases the Poet endeavours to argue or explain, to magnify or diminish, to raise Love or Hatred, Pity or Terror, or any other Passion, we ought to consider whether the Sentiments he makes use of are proper for those Ends. *Homer* is censured by the Criticks for his Defect as to this Particular in several Parts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, though at the same time those who have treated this great Poet with Candour have attributed this Defect to the Times in which he lived. It was the Fault of the Age, and not of *Homer*, if there wants that Delicacy, in some of his Sentiments, which now appears in the Works of Men of a much inferior Genius. Besides, if there are Blemishes in any particular Thoughts, there is an infinite Beauty in the greatest Part of them. In short, if there are many Poets who would not have fallen into the Meanness of some of his Sentiments, there are none who could have risen up to the Greatness of others. *Virgil* has excelled all others in the Propriety of his Sentiments. *Milton* shines likewise very much in this Particular: Nor must we miss one Consideration which adds to his Honour and Reputation. *Homer* and *Virgil* introduced Persons whose Characters are commonly known among Men, and such as are to be met with either in History, or in ordinary Conversation. *Milton's* Characters, most of them, lie out of Nature, and were to be formed purely by his own Invention. It shews a greater Genius in *Shakespear*, to have drawn his *Cah-ban*, than his *Hotspur* or *Julius Caesar*: The one was to be supplied out of his own Imagination, whereas the other might have been formed upon Tradition, History and Observation; it was much easier therefore for *Homer* to find proper Sentiments for an Assembly of Grecian Generals, than for *Milton* to diversify his infernal Council with proper Characters, and inspire them with a Variety of Sentiments. The Loves of *Dido* and *Aeneas* are only Copies of what has passed between other Persons. *Adam* and *Eve* before the Fall, are a different Species from that of Mankind, who are descended from them, and none
but

but a Poet of the most unbounded Invention, and the most exquisite Judgment, could have filled their Conversation and Behaviour with so many apt Circumstances during their State of Innocence.

NOR is it sufficient for an Epic Poem to be filled with such Thoughts as are *natural*, unless it abound also with such as are *sublime*. *Virgil* in this Particular falls short of *Homer*. He has not indeed so many Thoughts that are low and vulgar; but at the same time has not so many Thoughts that are sublime and noble. The Truth of it is, *Virgil* seldom rises into very astonishing Sentiments, where he is not so fired by the *Iliad*. He every where charms and pleases us by the Force of his own Genius; but seldom elevates and transports us where he does not fetch his Hints from *Homer*.

MILTON's chief Talent, and indeed his distinguishing Excellence lies in the Sublimity of his Thoughts. There are others of the Moderns who rival him in every other Part of Poetry; but in the Greatness of his Sentiments he triumphs over all the Poets both Modern and Ancient, *Homer* only excepted. It is impossible for the Imagination of Man to distend it self with greater Ideas, than those which he has laid together in his first, second and sixth Books. The seventh, which describes the Creation of the World, is likewise wonderfully sublime, tho' not so apt to stir up Emotion in the Mind of the Reader, nor consequently so perfect in the Epic Way of Writing, because it is filled with less Action. Let the judicious Reader compare what *Longinus* has observed on several Passages of *Homer*, and he will find Parallels for most of them in the *Paradise lost*.

FROM what has been said we may infer, that as there are two Kinds of Sentiments, the Natural and the Sublime, which are always to be pursued in an heroic Poem, there are also two Kinds of Thoughts which are carefully to be avoided. The first are such as are affected and unnatural; the second such as are mean and vulgar. As for the first Kind of Thoughts

we meet with little or nothing that is like them in *Virgil*: He has none of those trifling Points and Puerilities that are so often to be met with in *Ovid*, none of the Epigrammatick Turns of *Lucan*, none of those swelling Sentiments which are so frequently in *Statius* and *Claudian*, none of those mixed Embellishments of *Tasso*. Every Thing is just and natural. His Sentiments shew that he had a perfect Insight into humane Nature, and that he knew every Thing which was the most proper to affect it.

Mr. *Dryden* has in some Places, which I may hereafter take notice of, misrepresented *Virgil's* Way of Thinking as to this Particular, in the Translation he has given us of the *Æneid*. I do not remember that *Homer* any where falls into the Faults abovementioned, which were indeed the false Refinements of later Ages. *Milton*, it must be confest, has sometimes erred in this Respect, as I shall shew more at large in another Paper; tho' considering all the Poets of the Age in which he writ, were infected with this wrong Way of Thinking, he is rather to be admired that he did not give more into it, than that he did sometimes comply with the vicious Taste which still prevails so much among modern Writers.

BUT since several Thoughts may be natural which are low and groveling, an Epic Poet should not only avoid such Sentiments as are unnatural or affected, but also such as are mean and vulgar. *Homer* has opened a great Field of Raillery to Men of more Delicacy than Greatness of Genius, by the Homeliness of some of his Sentiments. But, as I have before said, these are rather to be imputed to the Simplicity of the Age in which he lived, to which I may also add, of that which he described, than to any Imperfection in that Divine Poet. *Zoilus*, among the Ancients, and Monsieur *Perrault*, among the Moderns, pushed their Ridicule very far upon him, on Account of some such Sentiments. There is no Blemish to be observed in *Virgil*, under this Head, and but a very few in *Milton*.

I shall give but one Instance of this Impropriety of Thought in *Homer*, and at the same time compare it with an Instance of the same Nature, both in *Virgil* and *Milton*. Sentiments which raise Laughter, can very seldom be admitted with any Decency into an heroic Poem, whose Business is to excite Passions of a much nobler Nature. *Homer*, however, in his Characters of *Vulcan* and *Thersites*, in his Story of *Mars* and *Venus*, in his Behaviour of *Irus*, and in other Passages, has been observed to have lapsed into the Burlesque Character, and to have departed from that serious Air which seems essential to the Magnificence of an Epic Poem. I remember but one Laugh in the whole *Aeneid*, which rises in the fifth Book upon *Monætes*, where he is represented as thrown overboard and drying himself upon a Rock. But this Piece of Mirth is so well timed, that the severest Critick can have nothing to say against it, for it is in the Book of Games and Diversions, where the Reader's Mind may be supposed to be sufficiently relaxed for such an Entertainment. The only Piece of Pleasantry in *Paradise Lost*, is where the evil Spirits are described as rallying the Angels upon the Success of their new invented Artillery. This Passage I look upon to be the most exceptionable in the whole Poem, as being nothing else but a String of Puns, and those too very indifferent.

————— *Satan beheld their Plight,
And to his Mates thus in Derision call'd.*

*O Friends, why come not on these Victors proud!
Ere while they fierce were coming, and when we,
To entertain them fair with open Front,
And Breast, (what could we more) propounded Terms
Of Composition; straight they changed their Minds,
Flew off, and into strange Vagaries fell,
As they would dance, yet for a dance they seem'd
Somewhat extravagant and wild, perhaps
For Joy of offer'd Peace; but I suppose
If our Proposals once again were heard,*

We should compel them to a quick Result.

To whom thus Belial in like gamefome Mood.

*Leader, the Terms we sent, were Terms of Weight,
Of hard Contents, and full of Force urg'd Home,
Such as we might perceive amus'd them all,
And stumbled many; who receives them right,
Had need, from Head to Foot, well understand;
Not understood, this Gift they have besides,
They shew us when our Foes walk not upright.*

*Thus they among themselves in pleasant Vein
Stood scoffing—*



SPECTATOR, No 285.

*Ne quicunque Deus, quicunque adhibebitur heros,
Regali conspectus in auro nuper & ostro,
Migret in Obscuras humili sermone tabernas:
Aut dum vitat humum, nubes & inania capset. Hor.*

HAVING already treated of the Fable, the Characters, and Sentiments in the *Paradise Lost*, we are in the last Place to consider the *Language*; and as the learned World is very much divided upon *Milton* as to this Point, I hope they will excuse me if I appear particular in any of my Opinions, and incline to those who judge the most advantageously of the Author.

IT is requisite that the Language of an Heroic Poem should be both Perspicuous and Sublime. In Proportion as either of these two Qualities are wanting, the Language is imperfect. Perspicuity is the first and most necessary Qualification; insomuch that a good-natur'd Reader sometimes overlooks a little Slip even in the Grammar or Syntax, where it is
impos-

impossible for him to mistake the Poet's Sense. Of this kind is that Passage in *Milton*, wherein he speaks of *Satan*.

————— *God and his Son except,
Created thing nought valu'd he nor shunn'd.*

And that in which he describes *Adam* and *Eve*.

*Adam the goodliest Man of Men since born
His Sons, the fairest of her Daughters Eve.*

IT is plain that in the former of these Passages, according to the natural Syntax, the Divine Persons mentioned in the first Line are represented as created Beings; and that in the other, *Adam* and *Eve* are confounded with their Sons and Daughters. Such little Blemishes as these, when the Thought is great and natural, we should, with *Horace*, impute to a pardonable Inadvertency, or to the Weakness of Human Nature, which cannot attend to each minute Particular, and give the last finishing to every Circumstance in so long a Work. The Ancient Critics therefore, who were acted by a Spirit of Candour, rather than that of Cavilling, invented certain Figures of Speech, on purpose to palliate little Errors of this Nature in the Writings of those Authors who had so many greater Beauties to atone for them.

IF Clearness and Perspicuity were only to be consulted, the Poet would have nothing else to do but to clothe his Thoughts in the most plain and natural Expressions. But since it often happens that the most obvious Phrases, and those which are used in ordinary Conversation, become too familiar to the Ear, and contract a kind of Meanness by passing through the Mouths of the Vulgar, a Poet should take particular Care to guard himself against Idiomatick Ways of speaking. *Ovid* and *Lucan* have many Poornesses of Expression upon this account, as taking up with the first

first Phrases that offered, without putting themselves to the Trouble of looking after such as would not only be natural, but also elevated and sublime. *Milton* has but a few Failings in this kind, of which, however, you may meet with some Instances, as in the following Passages.

Embris's and Idiots, Eremites and Friars
White, Black and Gray, with all their Trumpery,
Here Pilgrims roam—

A while Discourse they bold,
No Fear lest Dinner cool; when thus began

Our Author—
Who of all Ages to succeed, but feeling
The Evil on him brought by me, will curse
My Head, ill fare our Ancestor impure,
For this we may thank Adam—

The great Masters in Composition know very well that many an elegant Phrase becomes improper for a Poet or an Orator, when it has been debased by common Use. For this Reason the Works of Ancient Authors, which are written in dead Languages, have a great Advantage over those which are written in Languages that are now spoken. Were there any Mean Phrases or Idioms in *Virgil* and *Homer*, they would not shock the Ear of the most delicate Modern Reader, so much as they would have done that of an old *Greek* or *Roman*, because we never hear them pronounced in our Streets, or in ordinary Conversation.

It is not therefore sufficient, that the Language of an Epic Poem be Perspicuous, unless it be also Sublime. To this End it ought to deviate from the common Forms and ordinary Phrases of Speech. The Judgment of a Poet very much discovers it self in shunning the common Roads of Expression, without falling into such ways of Speech as may seem stiff and unnatural; he must not swell into a false Sublime, by endeavouring to avoid the other Extreme. Among

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the *Greeks*, *Æschylus*, and sometimes *Sophocles* were guilty of this Fault; among the *Latins*, *Claudian* and *Statius*; and among our own Countrymen, *Shakespeare* and *Lee*. In these Authors the Affectation of Greatness often hurts the Perspicuity of the Style, as in many others the Endeavour after Perspicuity prejudices its Greatness.

ARISTOTLE has observed, that the Idiomatick Style may be avoided, and the Sublime formed by the following Methods. First, by the Use of Metaphors: such are those in *Milton*.

Imparadised in one anothers Arms,
 ——— And in his Hand a Reed
 Stood waving tipt with Fire; ———
 The grassy Clods now calv'd. ———
 Spangled with Eyes ———

IN these and innumerable other Instances, the Metaphors are very bold but just; I must however observe, that the Metaphors are not thick sown in *Milton*, which always favours too much of Wit; that they never clash with one another, which, as *Aristotle* observes, turn a Sentence into a kind of an Enigma or Riddle; and that he seldom has Recourse to them where the proper and natural Words will do as well.

ANOTHER way of raising the Language, and giving it a Poetical Turn, is to make use of the Idioms of other Tongues. *Virgil* is full of the *Greek* Forms of Speech, which the Criticks call *Hellenisms*, as *Horace* in his Odes abounds with them much more than *Virgil*. I need not mention the several Dialects which *Homer* has made use of for this End. *Milton* in Conformity with the Practice of the Ancient Poets, and with *Aristotle's* Rule, has infused a great many *Latinisms* as well as *Græcisms*, and sometimes *Hebraisms*, into the Language of his Poem; as towards the Beginning of it.

Nor did they not perceive the evil Plight
In which they were, or the fierce Pains not feel.
Yet to their General's Voice they soon obey'd.

————— Who shall tempt with wand'ring Feet
The dark unbottom'd Infinite Abyss,
And through the palpable Obscure find out
His uncouth way, or spread his airy Flight
Upborn with indefatigable Wings
Over the vast Abrupt!

————— So both ascend
In the Visions of God —————

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UNDER this Head may be reckoned the placing the Adjective after the Substantive, the Transposition of Words, the turning the Adjective into a Substantive, with several other Foreign Modes of Speech, which this Poet has naturalized to give his Verse the greater Sound, and throw it out of Prose.

THE third Method mentioned by Aristotle, is what agrees with the Genius of the Greek Language more than with that of any other Tongue, and is therefore more used by Homer than by any other Poet. I mean the lengthning of a Phrase by the Addition of Words, which may either be inserted or omitted, as also by the extending or contracting of particular Words by the Insertion or Omission of certain Syllables. Milton has put in Practice this Method of raising his Language, as far as the Nature of our Tongue will permit, as in the Passage above-mentioned, *Eremite*, for what is *Hermite*, in common Discourse. If you observe the Measure of his Verse, he has with great Judgment suppressed a Syllable in several Words, and shortned those of two Syllables into one, by which Method, besides the above-mentioned Advantage, he has given a greater Variety to his Numbers. But this Practice is more particularly remarkable in the Names of Persons and Countries, as *Beelzebub*, *Hefsebon*, and in many other Particulars, where in

wherein he has either changed the Name, or made use of that which is not the most commonly known, that he might the better depart from the Language of the Vulgar.

THE same Reason recommended to him several old Words, which also makes his Poem appear the more venerable, and gives it a greater Air of Antiquity.

I must likewise take Notice, that there are in *Milton* several Words of his own Coining, as *Cerberean*, *miscreated*, *hell-doom'd*, *Embryon* Atoms, and many others. If the Reader is offended at this Liberty in our *English* Poet, I would recommend him to a Discourse in *Plutarch*, which shews us how frequently *Homer* has made Use of the same Liberty.

MILTON by the above-mentioned Helps, and by the Choice of the noblest Words and Phrases which our Tongue would afford him, has carried our Language to a greater Height than any of the *English* Poets have ever done before or after him, and made the Sublimity of his Stile equal to that of his Sentiments.

I have been the more particular in these Observations on *Milton's* Stile, because it is that Part of him in which he appears the most singular. The Remarks I have here made upon the Practice of other Poets, with my Observations out of *Aristotle*, will perhaps alleviate the Prejudice which some have taken to his Poem upon this Account; tho' after all I must confess, that I think his Stile, tho' admirable in general, is in some Places too much stiffened and obscured by the frequent Use of those Methods, which *Aristotle* has prescribed for the raising of it.

THIS Redundancy of those several Ways of Speech which *Aristotle* calls *foreign Language*, and with which *Milton* has so very much enriched, and in some Places darkened the Language of his Poem, was the more proper for his Use, because his Poem is written in Blank Verse. Rhyme, without any other Assistance, throws the Language off from Prose, and very often makes

makes an indifferent Phrase pass unregarded ; but where the Verse is not built upon Rhymes, there Pomp of Sound, and Energy of Expression, are indispensably necessary to support the Stile, and keep it from falling into the Flatness of Prose.

THOSE who have not a Taste for this Elevation of Stile, and are apt to ridicule a Poet when he goes out of the common Forms of Expression, would do well to see how *Aristotle* has treated an Ancient Author, called *Euclid*, for his insipid Mirth upon this Occasion. Mr. *Dryden* used to call this Sort of Men his Prose-Criticks.

I should under this Head of the Language, consider *Milton's* Numbers, in which he has made Use of several Elisions, that are not customary among other *English* Poets, as may be particularly observed in his cutting off the Letter *Y*, when it precedes a Vowel. This, and some other Innovations in the Measure of his Verse, has varied his Numbers, in such a Manner, as makes them incapable of satiating the Ear and cloying the Reader, which the same uniform Measure would certainly have done, and which the perpetual Returns of Rhyme never fail to do in long Narrative Poems. I shall close these Reflections upon the Language of *Paradise Lost*, with observing that *Milton* has copied after *Homer*, rather than *Virgil*, in the Length of his Periods, the Copiousness of his Phrases, and the running of his Verses into one another.





SPECTATOR, No 291.

—*Ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendor maculis, quas aut Incuria fudit,
Aut Humana parum cavet Natura*—

Hor.

I Have now consider'd *Milton's Paradise Lost* under those four great Heads of the Fable, the Characters, the Sentiments, and the Language; and have shewn that he excels, in general, under each of these Heads. I hope that I have made several Discoveries which may appear new, even to those who are versed in Critical Learning: Were I indeed to choose my Readers, by whose Judgment I would stand or fall, they should not be such as are acquainted only with the *French* and *Italian* Criticks, but also with the Antient and Modern who have written in either of the learned Languages. Above all, I would have them well versed in the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets, without which a Man very often fancies that he understands a Critick, when in reality he does not comprehend his Meaning.

IT is in Criticism, as in all other Sciences and Speculations; one who brings with him any implicit Notions and Observations which he has made in his reading of the Poets, will find his own Reflexions methodized and explained, and perhaps several little Hints that had passed in his Mind, perfected and improved in the Works of a good Critick; whereas one who has not these previous Lights, is very often an utter Stranger to what he reads, and apt to put a wrong Interpretation upon it.

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NOR is it sufficient, that a Man who sets up for a Judge in Criticism, should have perused the Authors above-mentioned, unless he has also a clear and logical Head. Without this Talent he is perpetually puzzled and perplexed amidst his own Blunders, mistakes the Sense of those he would confute, or if he chances to think right, does not know how to convey his Thoughts to another with Clearness and Perspicuity. *Aristotle*, who was the best Critick, was also one of the best Logicians that ever appeared in the World.

Mr. *Lock*'s Essay on Human Understanding would be thought a very odd Book for a Man to make himself Master of, who would get a Reputation by Critical Writings; though at the same time it is very certain, that an Author who has not learned the Art of distinguishing between Words and Things, and of ranging his Thoughts, and setting them in proper Lights, whatever Notions he may have, will lose himself in Confusion and Obscurity. I might further observe, that there is not a *Greek* or *Latin* Critick, who has not shewn, even in the Stile of his Criticisms, that he was a Master of all the Elegance and Delicacy of his Native Tongue.

THE Truth of it is, there is nothing more absurd than for a Man to set up for a Critick, without a good Insight into all the Parts of Learning; whereas many of those who have endeavoured to signalize themselves by Works of this Nature among our *English* Writers, are not only defective in the above-mentioned Particulars, but plainly discover by the Phrases which they make use of, and by their confused way of thinking, that they are not acquainted with the most common and ordinary Systems of Arts and Sciences. A few general Rules extracted out of the *French* Authors, with a certain Cant of Words, has sometimes set up an illiterate heavy Writer for a most judicious and formidable Critick.

ONE great Mark, by which you may discover a Critick who has neither Taste nor Learning, is this,

this, that he seldom ventures to praise any Passage in an Author which has not been before received and applauded by the Publick, and that his Criticism turns wholly upon little Faults and Errors. This Part of a Critick is so very easy to succeed in, that we find every ordinary Reader, upon the publishing of a new Poem, has Wit and Ill-nature enough to turn several Passages of it into Ridicule, and very often in the right Place. This Mr. Dryden has very agreeably remarked in those two celebrated Lines,

*Errors, like Straws, upon the Surface flow;
He who would search for Pearls must dive below.*

A true Critick ought to dwell rather upon Excellencies than Imperfections, to discover the concealed Beauties of a Writer, and communicate to the World such Things as are worth their Observation. The most exquisite Words and finest Strokes of an Author are those which very often appear the most doubtful and exceptionable, to a Man who wants a Relish for polite Learning; and they are these, which a sour undistinguishing Critick generally attacks with the greatest Violence. *Tully* observes, that it is very easy to brand or fix a Mark upon what he calls *Verbum ardens*, or, as it may be rendered into *English*, a glowing bold Expression, and to turn it into Ridicule by a cold ill-natured Criticism. A little Wit is equally capable of exposing a Beauty, and of aggravating a Fault, and though such a Treatment of an Author naturally produces Indignation in the Mind of an understanding Reader, it has however its Effect among the Generality of those whose Hands it falls into, the Rabble of Mankind being very apt to think that every Thing which is laughed at with any Mixture of Wit, is ridiculous in it self.

SUCH a Mirth as this, is always unseasonable in a Critick, as it rather prejudices the Reader than convinces him, and is capable of making a Beauty.

as well as a Blemish, the Subject of Derision. A Man, who cannot write with Wit on a proper Subject, is dull and stupid, but one who shews it in an improper Place, is as impertinent and absurd. Besides, a Man who has the Gift of Ridicule, is apt to find Fault with any Thing that gives him an Opportunity of exerting his beloved Talent, and very often censures a Passage, not because there is any Fault in it, but because he can be merry upon it. Such Kinds of Pleasantry are very unfair and disingenuous in Works of Criticism, in which the greatest Masters, both ancient and modern, have always appeared with a serious and instructive Air.

AS I intend in my next Paper to shew the Defects in *Milton's Paradise Lost*, I thought fit to premise these few Particulars, to the End that the Reader may know I enter upon it, as on a very ungrateful Work, and that I shall just point at the Imperfections, without endeavouring to inflame them with Ridicule. I must also observe with *Longinus*, that the Productions of a great Genius, with many Lapses and Inadvertencies, are infinitely preferable to the Works of an inferior Kind of Author, which are scrupulously exact and conformable to all the Rules of correct Writing.

I shall conclude my Paper with a Story out of *Boccacini*, which sufficiently shews us the Opinion that judicious Author entertained of the Sort of Criticks I have been here mentioning. A famous Critick, says he, having gathered together all the Faults of an eminent Poet, made a Present of them to *Apollo*, who received them very graciously, and resolved to make the Author a suitable Return for the Trouble he had been at in collecting them. In Order to this, he set before him a Sack of Wheat, as it had been just threshed out of the Sheaf. He then bid him pick out the Chaff from among the Corn, and lay it aside by it self. The Critick applied himself to the Task with great Industry and Pleasure, and after having made the due Separation, was presented by *Apollo* with the Chaff for his Pains.



SPECTATOR, No 297.

— *velut si*
Egregio inspersos reprehendās corpore nēvos.

Hor.

AFTER what I have said in my last *Saturday's* Paper, I shall enter on the Subject of this without farther Preface, and remark the several Defects which appear in the Fable, the Characters, the Sentiments, and the Language of *Milton's Paradise Lost*; not doubting but the Reader will pardon me, if I alledge at the same Time whatever may be said for the Extenuation of such Defects. The first Imperfection which I shall observe in the Fable is, that the Event of it is unhappy.

THE Fable of every Poem is according to *Aristotle's* Division either *Simple* or *Implex*. It is called Simple when there is no Change of Fortune in it, Implex when the Fortune of the chief Actor changes from Bad to Good, or from Good to Bad. The Implex Fable is thought the most perfect; I suppose, because it is more proper to stir up the Passions of the Reader, and to surprise him with a greater Variety of Accidents.

THE Implex Fable is therefore of two Kinds: in the first the chief Actor makes his Way through a long Series of Dangers and Difficulties, 'till he arrives at Honour and Prosperity, as we see in the Story of *Ulysses*. In the second, the chief Actor in the Poem falls from some eminent Pitch of Honour and Prosperity, into Misery and Disgrace. Thus we see *Adam* and *Eve* sinking from a State of Innocence and Happiness, into the most abject Condition of Sin and Sorrow.

THE most taking Tragedies among the Antients were built on this last Sort of Implex Fable, particularly the Tragedy of *OEdipus*, which proceeds upon a Story, if we may believe *Aristotle*, the most proper for Tragedy that could be invented by the Wit of Man. I have taken some Pains in a former Paper to shew, that this Kind of Implex Fable, wherein the Event is unhappy, is more apt to affect an Audience than that of the first Kind; notwithstanding many excellent Pieces among the Antients, as well as most of those which have been written of late Years in our own Country, are raised upon contrary Plans. I must however own, that I think this Kind of Fable, which is the most perfect in Tragedy, is not so proper for an Heroick Poem.

MILTON seems to have been sensible of this Imperfection in his Fable, and has therefore endeavoured to cure it by several Expedients; particularly by the Mortification which the great Adversary of Mankind meets with upon his Return to the Assembly of Infernal Spirits, as it is described in a beautiful Passage of the tenth Book; and likewise by the Vision wherein *Adam* at the Close of the Poem sees his Offspring triumphing over his great Enemy, and himself restored to a happier *Paradise* than that from which he fell.

THERE is another Objection against *Milton's* Fable, which is indeed almost the same with the former; tho' placed in a different Light, namely, That the Hero in the *Paradise Lost* is unsuccessful, and by no Means a Match for his Enemies. This gave Occasion to Mr. *Dryden's* Reflexion, that the Devil was in reality *Milton's* Hero. I think I have obviated this Objection in my first Paper. The *Paradise Lost* is an Epic, or a Narrative Poem, and he that looks for an Hero in it, searches for that which *Milton* never intended; but if he will needs fix the Name of an Hero upon any Person in it, 'tis certainly the *Messiah* who is the Hero, both in the principal Action, and

and in the chief Episodes. Paganism could not furnish out a real Action for a Fable greater than that of the *Iliad* or *Æneid*, and therefore an Heathen could not form a higher Notion of a Poem than one of that Kind which they call an Heroic. Whether *Milton's* is not of a sublimer Nature I will not presume to determine: It is sufficient, that I shew there is in the *Paradise Lost* all the Greatness of Plan, Regularity of Design, and masterly Beauties which we discover in *Homer* and *Virgil*.

I must in the next Place observe, that *Milton* has interwoven in the Texture of his Fable some Particulars which do not seem to have Probability enough for an Epic Poem, particularly in the Actions which he ascribes to *Sin* and *Death*, and the Picture which he draws of the *Limbo of Vanity*, with other Passages in the second Book. Such Allegories rather favour of the Spirit of *Spenser* and *Ariosto*, than of *Homer* and *Virgil*.

IN the Structure of his Poem he has likewise admitted of too many Digressions. It is finely observed by *Aristotle*, that the Author of an Heroick Poem should seldom speak himself, but throw as much of his Work as he can into the Mouths of those who are his principal Actors. *Aristotle* has given no Reason for this Precept; but I presume it is because the Mind of the Reader is more awed and elevated when he hears *Æneas* or *Achilles* speak, than when *Virgil* or *Homer* talk in their own Persons. Besides that assuming the Character of an eminent Man is apt to fire the Imagination, and raise the Ideas of the Author. *Tully* tell us, mentioning his Dialogue of Old-age, in which *Cato* is the chief Speaker, that upon a Review of it he was agreeably imposed upon, and fancied that it was *Cato*, and not he himself, who uttered his Thoughts on that Subject.

IF the Reader would be at the Pains to see how the Story of the *Iliad* and *Æneid* is delivered by those Persons who act in it, he will be surprized to find how little in either of these Poems proceeds from
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the Authors. *Milton* has, in the general Disposition of his Fable, very finely observed this great Rule; in-somuch, that there is scarce a third Part of it which comes from the Poet; the rest is spoken either by *Adam* and *Eve*, or by some Good or Evil Spirit who is engaged either in their Destruction or Defence.

FROM what has been here observed, it appears, that Digressions are by no Means to be allowed of in an Epic Poem. If the Poet, even in the ordinary Course of his Narration, should speak as little as possible, he should certainly never let his Narration sleep for the Sake of any Reflexions of his own. I have often observed, with a secret Admiration, that the longest Reflexion in the *Aeneid* is in that Passage of the Tenth Book, where *Turnus* is represented as dressing himself in the Spoils of *Pallas*, whom he had slain. *Virgil* here lets his Fable stand still for the Sake of the following Remark. *How is the Mind of Man ignorant of Futurity, and unable to bear prosperous Fortune with Moderation? The Time will come when Turnus shall wish that he had left the Body of Pallas untouched, and curse the Day on which he dressed himself in these Spoils.* As the great Event of the *Aeneid*, and the Death of *Turnus*, whom *Aeneas* slew, because he saw him adorned with the Spoils of *Pallas*, turns upon this Incident, *Virgil* went out of his Way to make this Reflexion upon it, without which so small a Circumstance might possibly have slipped out of his Reader's Memory. *Lucan*, who was an Injudicious Poet, lets drop his Story very frequently for the Sake of his unnecessary Digressions, or his *Diverticula*, as *Scaliger* calls them. If he gives us an Account of the Prodigies which preceded the Civil War, he declaims upon the Occasion, and shews how much happier it would be for Man, if he did not feel his evil Fortune before it comes to pass, and suffer not only by its real Weight, but by the Apprehension of it. *Milton's* Complaint for his Blindness, his Panegyrick on Marriage, his Reflexions on *Adam* and *Eve's* going naked, of the Angels eating,

ing, and several other Passages in his Poem, are liable to the same Exception, tho' I must confess there is so great a Beauty in these very Digressions that I would not wish them out of his Poem.

I have, in a former Paper, spoken of the *Characters* of *Milton's Paradise Lost*, and declared my Opinion, as to the Allegorical Persons who are introduced in it.

IF we look into the *Sentiments*, I think they are sometimes defective under the following Heads; First, as there are several of them too much pointed, and some that degenerate even into Puns. Of this last Kind, I am afraid is that in the First Book, where, speaking of the Pigmies, he calls them

————— *The small Infantry*
Warr'd on by Cranes —————

ANOTHER Blemish that appears in some of his Thoughts, is his frequent Allusion to Heathen Fables, which are not certainly of a Piece with the Divine Subject, of which he treats. I do not find fault with these Allusions, where the Poet himself represents them as fabulous, as he does in some Places, but where he mentions them as Truths and Matters of Fact. The Limits of my Paper will not give me leave to be particular in Instances of this Kind: The Reader will easily remark them in the Perusal of the Poem.

A Third Fault in his Sentiments, is an unnecessary Ostentation of Learning, which likewise occurs very frequently. It is certain, that both *Homer* and *Virgil* were Masters of all the Learning of their Times, but it shews itself in their Works, after an indirect and concealed Manner. *Milton* seems ambitious of letting us know, by his Excursions on Free-Will and Predestination, and his many Glances upon History, Astronomy, Geography and the like, as well as by the Terms and Phrases he sometimes makes use of, that he was acquainted with the whole Circle of Arts and Sciences.

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IF, in the last Place, we consider the *Language* of this great Poet, we must allow what I have hinted in a former Paper, that it is often too much laboured, and sometimes obscured by old Words, Transpositions, and Foreign Idioms. *Seneca's* Objection to the *Stile* of a great Author, *Riget ejus oratio, nihil in ea placidum, nihil lenè*, is what many Criticks make to *Milton*: As I cannot wholly refute it, so I have already apologized for it in another Paper; to which I may further add, That *Milton's* Sentiments and Ideas were so wonderfully sublime, that it would have been impossible for him to have represented them in their full Strength and Beauty, without having Recourse to these Foreign Assistances. Our Language sunk under him, and was unequal to that Greatness of Soul, which furnished him with such glorious Conceptions.

A second Fault in his Language is, that he often affects a Kind of Jingle in his Words, as in the following Passages, and many others.

And brought into the World a World of Woe.

————— *Begirt th' Almighty Throne*

Beseeking or besieging—————

This tempted our Attempt—————

At one slight Bound high over-leapt all Bound.

I know there are Figures for this Kind of Speech, that some of the greatest Ancients have been guilty of it, and that *Aristotle* himself has given it a Place in his Rhetorick among the Beauties of that Art. But as it is in itself poor and trifling, it is I think at present universally exploded by all the Masters of polite Writing.

THE last Fault which I shall take notice of in *Milton's* *Stile*, is the frequent Use of what the Learned call *Technical Words*, or Terms of Art. It is one of the great Beauties of Poetry, to make hard Things intelligible, and to deliver what is abstruse of itself in such easy Language as may be understood by ordinary Readers:

Readers : Besides, that the Knowledge of a Poet should rather seem born with him, or inspired, than drawn from Books and Systems. I have often wondered, how Mr. Dryden could translate a Passage out of *Virgil*, after the following Manner.

*Tack to the Larboard, and stand off to Sea,
Veer Star-board Sea and Land.* —————

Milton makes use of *Larboard* in the same Manner. When he is upon Building, he mentions *Doric Pillars, Pilasters, Cornice, Freeze, Architrave*. When he talks of Heavenly Bodies, you meet with *Ecliptic, Eccentric, the Trepidation, Stars dropping from the Zenith, Rays culminating from the Equator*. To which might be added many Instances of the like Kind in several other Arts and Sciences.

I shall in my next Papers give an Account of the many particular Beauties in *Milton*, which would have been too long to insert under those general Heads I have already treated of, and with which I intend to conclude this Piece of Criticism.





SPECTATOR, No 303.

——— *volet hæc sub luce videri,*
Judicis argutum quæ non formidat acumen. Hor.

I Have seen in the Works of a modern Philosopher, a Map of the Spots in the Sun. My last Paper of the Faults and Blemishes in *Milton's Paradise Lost*, may be considered as a Piece of the same Nature. To pursue the Allusion: As it is observed, that among the bright Parts of the luminous Body above mentioned, there are some which glow more intensely, and dart a stronger light than others; so, notwithstanding I have already shewn *Milton's Poem* to be very beautiful in general, I shall now proceed to take notice of such Beauties as appear to me more exquisite than the rest. *Milton* has proposed the Subject of his Poem in the following Verses.

*Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
 Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
 Brought Death into the world and all our woe,
 With loss of Eden, 'till one greater Man
 Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
 Sing Heav'nly Muse*—————

THESE Lines are perhaps as plain, simple and unadorned as any of the whole Poem, in which Particular the Author has conform'd himself to the Example of *Homer*, and the Precept of *Horace*.

HIS Invocation to a Work which turns in a great Measure upon the Creation of the World, is very properly

perly made to the Muse who inspired *Moses* in those Books from whence our Author drew his Subject, and to the Holy Spirit who is therein represented as operating after a particular Manner in the first Production of Nature. This whole Exordium rises very happily into noble Language and Sentiment, as I think the Transition to the Fable is exquisitely beautiful and natural.

THE Nine-days Astonishment, in which the Angels lay entranced after their dreadful Overthrow and Fall from Heaven, before they could recover either the Use of Thought or Speech, is a noble Circumstance, and very finely imagined. *Vid. Hesiod.* The Division of Hell fell into Seas of Fire, and into firm Ground impregnated with the same furious Element, with that particular Circumstance of the Exclusion of *Hope* from those infernal Regions, are Instances of the same great and fruitful Invention.

THE Thoughts in the first Speech and Description of *Satan*, who is one of the principal Actors in this Poem, are wonderfully proper to give us a full Idea of him. His Pride, Envy and Revenge, Obstinacy, Despair and Impenitence, are all of them very artfully interwoven. In short, his first Speech is a Complication of all those Passions which discover themselves separately in several other of his Speeches in the Poem. The whole Part of this great Enemy of Mankind is filled with such Incidents as are very apt to raise and terrify the Reader's Imagination. Of this Nature, in the Book now before us, is his being the first that awakens out of the general Trance, with his Posture on the burning Lake, his rising from it, and the Description of his Shield and Spear.

*Thus Satan talking to his nearest mate,
With head up-lift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blaz'd, his other parts beside
Prone on the Flood, extended long and large,*

Lay floating many a rood —————
 Forth with upright he rears from off the pool
 His mighty Stature ; on each hand the flames
 Driv'n backward slope their pointing Spires, and rowl'd
 In Billows leave i' th' midst a horrid vale.
 Then with expanded Wings he steers his flight
 Aloft, incumbent on the dusky Air
 That felt unusual weight —————

————— His pondrous Shield,
 Ethereal Temper, massy, large and round,
 Behind him cast ; the broad Circumference
 Hung on his Shoulders like the Moon, whose orb
 Thro' Optick Glas the Tuscan Artists view
 At Ev'ning from the top of Fesole,
 Or in Valdarno to descry new Lands,
 Rivers or Mountains on her spotty Globe.
 His Spear to equal which the tallest pine
 Hewn on Norwegian Hills to be the Mast
 Of some great Ammiral, were but a wand,
 He walk'd with to support uneasy Steps
 Over the burning Marl ———.

TO which we may add his Call to the fallen
 Angels that lay plunged and stupified in the Sea of
 Fire.

He call'd so loud, that all the hollow deep
 Of Hell resounded —————

BUT there is no single Passage in the whole
 Poem worked up to a greater Sublimity, than that
 wherein his Person is described in those celebrated
 Lines.

————— He, above the rest
 In Shape and Gesture proudly eminent,
 Stood like a Tower, &c.

HIS Sentiments are every way answerable to his Character, and suitable to a created Being of the most exalted and most depraved Nature. Such is that in which he takes Possession of his Place of Torments.

————— *Hail Horrors, hail
Infernal World, and thou profoundest Hell
Receive thy new Possessor, one who brings
A Mind not to be changed by place or time.*

And afterwards,

————— *Here at least
We shall be free ; th' Almighty hath not built
Here for his Envy, will not drive us hence :
Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
To reign is worth ambition, tho' in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven.*

AMIDST those Impieties which this Enraged Spirit utters in other Places of the Poem, the Author has taken care to introduce none that is not big with Absurdity, and incapable of shocking a Religious Reader ; his Words, as the Poet describes them, bearing only a *Semblance of Worth, not Substance*. He is likewise with great Art described as owning his Adversary to be Almighty. Whatever perverse Interpretation he puts on the Justice, Mercy, and other Attributes of the Supreme Being, he frequently confesses his Omnipotence, that being the Perfection he was forc'd to allow him, and the only Consideration which could support his Pride under the Shame of his Defeat.

NOR must I here omit that beautiful Circumstance of his bursting out in Tears, upon his Survey of those innumerable Spirits whom he had involved in the same Guilt and Ruin with himself.

*He now prepared
To speak; whereat their doubled Ranks they bend
From Wing to Wing and half inclose him round
With all his Peers: Attention held them mute.
Thrice he assay'd, and thrice in spite of Scorn
Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth*

THE Catalogue of Evil Spirits has Abundance of Learning in it, and a very agreeable Turn of Poetry, which rises in a great measure from its describing the Places where they were worshipped, by those beautiful Marks of Rivers, so frequent among the antient Poets. The Author had doubtless in this Place *Homer's* Catalogue of Ships, and *Virgil's* List of Warriours in his view. The Characters of *Moloch* and *Belial* prepare the Reader's Mind for their respective Speeches and Behaviour in the second and sixth Book. The Account of *Thammuz* is finely Romantick, and suitable to what we read among the Antients of the Worship which was paid to that Idol.

*Thammuz came next behind,
Whose annual Wound in Lebanon allur'd
The Syrian Damsels, to lament his fate,
In am'rous Ditties all a Summer's day,
While smooth Adonis from his native Rock
Ran purple to the Sea, suppos'd with Blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the Love tale
Infected Sion's Daughters with like Heat,
Whose wanton Passions in the sacred Porch
Ezekiel saw, when by the Vision led
His Eye survey'd the dark Idolatries
Of alienated Judah.*

THE Reader will pardon me if I insert as a Note on this beautiful Passage, the Account given us by the late ingenious Mr. *Maundrell* of this Antient Piece of Worship, and probably the first Occasion of such a Superstition.

perdition. ' We came to a fair large River—doubtless
' the ancient River *Adonis*, so famous for the Idolatrous
' Rites perform'd here in Lamentation of *Adonis*. We
' had the Fortune to see what may be supposed to be
' the Occasion of that Opinion which *Lucian* relates,
' concerning this River, *viz.* That this Stream at cer-
' tain Seasons of the Year, especially about the Feast
' of *Adonis*, is of a bloody Colour; which the Hea-
' thens looked upon as proceeding from a kind of
' Sympathy in the River for the Death of *Adonis*, who
' was killed by a wild Boar in the Mountains, out of
' which this Stream rises. Something like this we saw
' actually come to pass; for the Water was stain'd to
' a surprizing Redness; and, as we observ'd in tra-
' velling, had discolour'd the Sea a great way into
' a reddish Hue, occasion'd doubtless by a sort of
' Minium, or red Earth, wash'd into the River by the
' Violence of the Rain, and not by any Stain from
' *Adonis's* Blood.'

THE Passage in the Catalogue, explaining the man-
ner how Spirits transform themselves by Contraction,
or Enlargement of their Dimensions, is introduced with
great Judgment, to make way for several surprizing
Accidents in the Sequel of the Poem. There follows
one, at the very End of the First Book, which is what
the *French* Criticks call *Marvellous*, but at the same
Time *probable* by reason of the Passage last mentioned.
As soon as the Infernal Palace is finished, we are told
the Multitude and Rabble of Spirits immediately shrunk
themselves into a small Compass, that there might be
Room for such a numberless Assembly in this capa-
cious Hall. But it is the Poet's Refinement upon this
Thought, which I most admire, and which is indeed
very noble in its self. For he tells us, that not-
withstanding the vulgar, among the fallen Spirits,
contracted their Forms, those of the first Rank
and Dignity still preserved their natural Dimen-
sions.

*Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest Forms
 Reduc'd their Shapes immense, and were at large
 Though without Number still amidst the Hall,
 Of that infernal Court. But far within,
 And in their own Dimensions like themselves,
 The Great Seraphick Lords and Cherubim,
 In close recess and secret conclave fate,
 A thousand Demy-Gods on Golden Seats,
 Frequent and full——*

THE Character of Mammon, and the Description of the Pandæmonium, are full of Beauties.

THERE are several other Strokes in the First Book wonderfully poetical, and Instances of that Sublime Genius so peculiar to the Author. Such is the Description of *Azazel's* Stature, and of the Infernal Standard, which he unfurls; as also of that ghastly Light, by which the Fiends appear to one another in their Place of Torments.

*The Seat of Desolation, void of Light,
 Save what the glimm'ring of these livid Flames
 Casts pale and dreadful——*

THE Shout of the whole Host of fallen Angels when drawn up in Battle Array :

*——The Universal Host up sent
 A Shout that tore Hell's Concave, and beyond
 Frighted the Reign of Chaos and old Night.*

THE Review, which the Leader makes of his Infernal Army :

*——He thro' the armed files
 Darts his experienc'd Eye, and soon traverse
 The whole Battalion views, their Order due,
 Their Visages and Stature as of Gods,
 Their number last he sums, and now his Heart*

Distends

*Disfends with Pride, and hard'ning in his Strength
Glories——*

THE Flash of Light, which appeared upon the
drawing of their Swords ;

*He spake ; and to confirm his Words outflow
Millions of flaming Swords, drawn from the Thighs
Of mighty Cherubim ; the sudden Blaze
Far round illumin'd Hell——*

THE sudden Production of the Pandemonium ;

*Anon out of the Earth a Fabrick huge
Rose like an Exhalation, with the Sound
Of dulcet Symphonies and Voices sweet.*

THE artificial Illuminations made in it.

*——From the arched Roof
Pendent by subtle Magick, many a Row
Of Starry Lamps and blazing Crescents, fed
With Naphtha and Asphaltus, yielded Light
As from a Sky——*

THERE are also several noble Similies and Allu-
sions in the first Book of *Paradise Lost*. And here
I must observe, that when *Milton* alludes either to
Things or Persons, he never quits his Simile till it
rises to some very great Idea, which is often foreign to
the Occasion that gave Birth to it. The Resemblance
does not, perhaps, last above a Line or two, but the
Poet runs on with the Hint, till he has raised out of
it some glorious Image or Sentiment, proper to inflame
the Mind of the Reader, and to give it that sub-
lime Kind of Entertainment, which is suitable to the
Nature of an Heroic Poem. Those, who are acquaint-
ed with *Homer's* and *Virgil's* Way of Writing, cannot
but be pleased with this Kind of Structure in *Milton's*
Similitudes.

Similitudes. I am the more particular on this Head, because ignorant Readers, who have formed their Taste upon the quaint Similies, and little Turns of Wit, which are so much in Vogue among modern Poets, cannot relish these Beauties which are of a much higher Nature, and are therefore apt to censure *Milton's* Comparisons, in which they do not see any surprising Points of Likeness. Monsieur *Perrault* was a Man of this vitiated Relish, and for that very Reason has endeavoured to turn into Ridicule several of *Homer's* Similitudes, which he calls *Comparisons à longue queue, Long-tail'd Comparisons*. I shall conclude this Paper on the First Book of *Milton* with the Answer which Monsieur *Boileau* makes to *Perrault* on this Occasion: 'Comparisons, says he, in
' Odes and Epic Poems are not introduced only to
' illustrate and embellish the Discourse, but to
' amuse and relax the Mind of the Reader, by
' frequently disengaging him from too painful an
' Attention to the principal Subject, and by lead-
' ing him into other agreeable Images. *Homer*,
' says he, excelled in this Particular, whose Com-
' parisons abound with such Images of Nature as
' are proper to relieve and diversify his Subjects.
' He continually instructs the Reader, and makes
' him take notice, even in Objects which are every
' Day before our Eyes, of such Circumstances as we
' should not otherwise have observed. *To this he adds*,
' as a Maxim universally acknowledged, that it is not
' necessary in Poetry for the Points of the Compa-
' rison to correspond with one another exactly, but
' that a general Resemblance is sufficient, and that
' too much Nicety in this Particular favours of the
' Rhetorician and Epigrammatist.

IN short, if we look into the Conduct of *Homer*, *Virgil* and *Milton*, as the great Fable is the Soul of each Poem, so to give their Works an agreeable Variety, their Episodes are so many short Fables, and their
Similies

Similies so many short Episodes, to which you may add, if you please, that their Metaphors are so many short Similies. If the Reader considers the Comparisons in the first Book in *Milton*, of the Sun in an Eclipse, of the sleeping *Leviathan*, of the Bees swarming about their Hive, of the fairy Dance, in the View wherein I have here placed them, he will easily discover the great Beauties that are in each of those Passages.



SPECTATOR, N^o 309.

*Di, quibus imperium est animarum, umbræque silentes,
Et Chaos, et Phlegethon, loca nocte silentia latè;
Sit mihi fas audita loqui: sit numine vestro
Pandere res altâ terrâ et caligine mersas.*

Virg.

I HAVE before observed in general, that the Persons whom *Milton* introduces into his Poem always discover such Sentiments and Behaviour, as are in a peculiar Manner conformable to the respective Characters. Every Circumstance in their Speeches and Actions, is with great Justness and Delicacy adapted to the Persons who speak and act. As the Poet very much excels in this Consistency of his Characters, I shall beg Leave to consider several Passages of the Second Book in this Light. That superior Greatness, and Mock-Majesty, which is ascribed to the Prince of the fallen Angels, is admirably preserved in the Beginning of this Book. His opening and closing the Debate; his taking upon himself this great Enterprize at the Thought of which the whole infernal Assembly trembled; his encountering the hideous Phantom who guarded

guarded the Gates of Hell, and appeared to him in all his Terrors, are Instances of that proud and daring Mind which could not brook Submission even to Omnipotence.

*SATAN was now at Hand, and from his Seat
The Monster moving onward came as fast
With horrid Strides. Hell trembled as he strode,
TB undaunted Fiend what this might be admir'd,
Admir'd, not fear'd——*

THE same Boldness and Intrepidity of Behaviour discovers it self in the several Adventures which he meets with during his Passage through the Regions of unformed Matter, and particularly in his Address to those tremendous Powers who are described as presiding over it.

THE Part of *Moloch* is likewise in all its Circumstances full of that Fire and Fury, which distinguish this Spirit from the rest of the fallen Angels. He is described in the first Book as besmeared with the Blood of human Sacrifices, and delighted with the Tears of Parents and the Cries of Children. In the second Book he is marked out as the fiercest Spirit that fought in Heav'n; and if we consider the Figure which he makes in the sixth Book, where the Battle of the Angels is described, we find it every Way answerable to the same famous enraged Character.

*——Where the might of Gabriel fought,
And with fierce Ensigns pierc'd the deep array
Of Moloc, furious King who him defy'd,
And at his Chariot wheels to drag him bound
Threaten'd, nor from the holy one of Heav'n
Refrain'd his Tongue blasphemous; but anon
Down cloven to the waste, with shatter'd arms
And uncouth pain fled bellowing.——*

IT may be worth while to observe, that *Milton* has represented this violent impetuous Spirit, who is hurried on by such precipitate Passions, as the *first* that rises in that Assembly, to give his Opinion upon their present Posture of Affairs. Accordingly he declares himself abruptly for War, and appears incensed at his Companions, for losing so much Time as even to deliberate upon it. All his Sentiments are rash, audacious and desperate. Such is that of arming themselves with their Tortures, and turning their Punishments upon him who inflicted them.

—No, let us rather chuse,
Arm'd with Hell-flames and Fury, all at once
O'er Heav'n's high tow'rs to force resistless Way,
Turning our Tortures into horrid Arms
Against the Tort'rer; when to meet the Noise
Of his almighty Engine he shall hear
Infernal Thunder, and for Lightning see
Black fire and horror shot with equal Rage
Among his Angels: and his Throne it self
Mixt with Tartarean Sulphur, and strange Fire,
His own invented Torments—

HIS preferring Annihilation to Shame or Misery, is also highly suitable to his Character; as the Comfort he draws from their disturbing the Peace of Heaven, that if it be not Victory it is Revenge, is a Sentiment truly diabolical, and becoming the Bitterness of this implacable Spirit.

BELIAL is described, in the first Book, as the Idol of the lewd and luxurious. He is in the second Book, pursuant to that Description, characterised as timorous and slothful; and if we look into the sixth Book, we find him celebrated in the Battle of Angels for Nothing but that Scoffing Speech which he makes to *Satan*, on their supposed Advantage over the Enemy.

my. As his Appearance is uniform, and of a Piece in these three several Views, we find his Sentiments in the infernal Assembly every Way conformable to his Character. Such are his Apprehensions of a second Battle, his Horrors of Annihilation, his preferring to be miserable rather than *not to be*. I need not observe, that the Contrast of Thought in this Speech, and that which precedes it, gives an agreeable Variety to the Debate.

MAMMON's Character is so fully drawn in the first Book, that the Poet adds Nothing to it in the Second. We were before told, that he was the first who taught Mankind to ransack the Earth for Gold and Silver, and that he was the Architect of *Pandemonium*, or the infernal Palace, where the evil Spirits were to meet in Council. His Speech in this Book is every where suitable to so depraved a Character. How proper is that Reflection, of their being unable to taste the Happiness of Heaven were they actually there, in the Mouth of one, who while he was in Heaven is said to have his Mind dazled with the outward Poms and Glories of the Place, and to have been more intent on the Riches of the Pavement, than on the Beautifick Vision. I shall also leave the Reader to judge how agreeable the following Sentiments are to the same Character.

—————*This deep World*
Of Darknes do we dread? How oft amidst
Thick Cloud and dark doth Heav'n's all-ruling Sire
Chuse to reside, his Glory unobscured,
And with the Majesty of Darknes round
Covers his Throne; from whence deep Thunders roar
Mustring their Rage, and Heav'n resembles Hell?
As be our Darknes, cannot we his Light
Imitate when we please? This Desert Soil
Wants not her bidden Lustre, Gems and Gold;
Nor want we Skill or Art, from whence to raise
Magnificence, and what can Heav'n shew more!

B E E L-

BEELZEBUB, who is reckon'd the second in Dignity that fell, and is in the first Book, the second that awakens out of the Trance, and confers with Satan upon the Situation of their Affairs, maintains his Rank in the Book now before us. There is a wonderful Majesty described in his rising up to speak. He acts as a Kind of Moderator between the two opposite Parties, and proposes a third Undertaking, which the whole Assembly gives into. The Motion he makes of detaching one of their Body in Search of a new World is grounded upon a Project devised by Satan, and cursorily proposed by him in the following Lines of the first Book.

*Space may produce new Worlds, whereof so rise
There went a Fame in Heav'n, that he ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant
A Generation, whom his choice Regard
Should favour equal to the Sons of Heav'n:
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first Eruption, thither or elsewhere:
For this infernal Pit shall never hold
Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor th' Abyss
Long under Darkness over. But these Thoughts
Full Counsel must mature.*

IT is on this Project that Beelzebub grounds his Proposal.

—————*What if we find
Some easier Enterprize? There is a Place
(If antient and prophetic Fame in Heav'n
Err not) another World, the happy Seat
Of some new Race call'd MAN, about this Time
To be created like to us, though less
In Power and Excellence, but favour'd more
Of him who rules above; so was his Will
Pronounc'd among the Gods, and by an Oath,
That shook Heav'n's whole Circumference, confirm'd.*

THE Reader may observe how just it was, not to omit in the first Book the Project upon which the whole Poem turns: As also that the Prince of the fallen Angels was the only proper Person to give it Birth, and that the next to him in Dignity was the fittest to second and support it.

THERE is besides, I think, something wonderfully beautiful, and very apt to affect the Reader's Imagination, in this antient Prophecy or Report in Heaven, concerning the Creation of Man. Nothing could shew more the Dignity of the Species, than this Tradition which ran of them before their Existence. They are represented to have been the Talk of Heaven, before they were created. *Virgil*, in Compliment to the Roman Commonwealth, makes the Heroes of it appear in their State of Pre-existence; but *Milton* does a far greater Honour to Mankind in general, as he gives us a Glimpse of them even before they are in Being.

THE rising of this great Assembly is described in a very sublime and poetical Manner.

*Their rising all at once was as the Sound
Of Thunder heard remote——*

THE Diversions of the fallen Angels, with the particular Account of their Place of Habitation, are described with great Pregnancy of Thought, and Copiousness of Invention. The Diversions are every Way suitable to Beings who had nothing left them but Strength and Knowledge misapplied. Such are their Contentions at the Race, and in Feats of Arms, with their Entertainment in the following Lines.

*Others with vast Typhæan Rage more fell
Rend up both Rocks and Hills, and ride the Air
In Whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar.*

THEIR Musick is employed in celebrating their own criminal Exploits, and their Discourse in sounding the

the unfathomable Depths of Fate, Free-will, and Fore-knowledge.

THE several Circumstances in the Description of Hell are finely imagined; as the four Rivers which disgorge themselves into the Sea of Fire, the Extremes of Cold and Heat, and the River of Oblivion. The monstrous Animals produced in that infernal World are represented by a single Line, which gives us a more horrid Idea of them, than a much longer Description would have done.

——— *Nature breeds,*
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious Things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
'Than Fables yet have feign'd, or Fear conceiv'd,
Gorgons, and Hydra's, and Chimera's dire.

THIS Episode of the fallen Spirits and their Place of Habitation, comes in very happily to unbend the Mind of the Reader from its Attention to the Debate. An ordinary Poet would indeed have spun out so many Circumstances to a great Length, and by that Means have weakned, instead of illustrated, the principal Fable.

THE Flight of Satan to the Gates of Hell is finely imaged.

I have already declared my Opinion of the Allegory concerning *Sin* and *Death*, which is however a very finished Piece in its Kind, when it is not considered as a Part of an Epic Poem. The Genealogy of the several Persons is contrived with great Delicacy. *Sin* is the Daughter of *Satan*, and *Death* the Offspring of *Sin*. The incestuous Mixture between *Sin* and *Death* produces those Monsters and Hell-hounds which from Time to Time enter into their Mother, and tear the Bowels of her who gave them Birth. These are the Terrors of an evil Conscience, and the proper Fruits of *Sin*, which naturally rise from the Apprehensions of *Death*. This last beautiful Moral is, I think, clearly intimated

in the Speech of *Sin*, where complaining of this her dreadful Issue, she adds,

Before mine Eyes in Opposition sits,
Grim *Death* thy Son and Foe who sets them on,
And me his Parent would full soon devour
For Want of other Prey, but that he knows
His End with mine involv'd——

I need not mention to the Reader the beautiful Circumstance in the last Part of this Quotation. He will likewise observe how naturally the three Persons concerned in this Allegory are tempted by one common Interest to enter into a Confederacy together, and how properly *Sin* is made the Portress of Hell, and the only Being that can open the Gates to that World of Tortures.

THE descriptive Part of this Allegory is likewise very strong, and full of sublime Ideas. The Figure of *Death*, the Regal Crown upon his Head, his Menace of *Satan*, his advancing to the Combat, the Outcry at his Birth, are Circumstances too noble to be pass over in Silence, and extremely suitable to this *King of Terrors*. I need not mention the Justness of Thought which is observed in the Generation of these several Symbolical Persons, that *Sin* was produced upon the first Revolt of *Satan*, that *Death* appeared soon after he was cast into Hell, and that the Terrors of Conscience were conceived at the Gate of this Place of Torments. The Description of the Gates is very poetical, as the opening of them is full of *Milton's* Spirit.

——— O N a sudden open fly
With impetuous recoil and jarring Sound
Th' infernal Doors, and on their Hinges grate
Harsh Thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus. She open'd, but to shut
Excell'd her Power; the Gates wide open flood,
That with extended Wings a banner'd Host

Under

*Under spread Ensigns marching might pass through
With Horse and Chariots rank'd in loose array;
So wide they stood, and like a Furnace Mouth
Cast forth redounding Smoke and ruddy Flame.*

IN Satan's Voyage through the Chaos there are several imaginary Persons described, as residing in that immense Waste of Matter. This may perhaps be conformable to the Taste of those Criticks who are pleased with Nothing in a Poet which has not Life and Manners ascribed to it; but for my own Part, I am pleased most with those Passages in this Description which carry in them a greater Measure of Probability, and are such as might possibly have happened. Of this Kind is his first Mounting in the Smoke, that rises from the infernal Pit, his falling into a Cloud of Nitre, and the like combustible Materials, that by their Explosion still hurried him forward in his Voyage; his springing upward like a Pyramid of Fire, with his laborious Passage through that Confusion of Element, which the Poet calls

The Womb of Nature and perhaps her Grave.

THE Glimmering Light which shot into the *Chaos* from the utmost Verge of the Creation, with the distant Discovery of the Earth that hung close by the Moon, are wonderfully beautiful and poetical.





SPECTATOR, No 315.

*Nec deus interfit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit*—

Hor.

HORACE advises a Poet to consider thoroughly the Nature and Force of his Genius. *Milton* seems to have known perfectly well wherein his Strength lay, and has therefore chosen a Subject entirely conformable to those Talents of which he was Master. As his Genius was wonderfully turned to the Sublime, his Subject is the noblest that could have entred into the Thoughts of Man. Every thing that is truly great and astonishing, has a Place in it. The whole System of the intellectual World; the *Chaos*, and the Creation; Heaven, Earth, and Hell; enter into the Constitution of his Poem.

HAVING in the First and Second Book represented the Infernal World with all its Horrors, the Thread of his Fable naturally leads him into the opposite Regions of Bliss and Glory.

IF *Milton's* Majesty forsakes him any where, it is in those Parts of his Poem, where the Divine Persons are introduced as Speakers. One may, I think, observe that the Author proceeds with a kind of Fear and Trembling, whilst he describes the Sentiments of the Almighty. He dares not give his Imagination its full Play, but chooses to confine himself to such Thoughts as are drawn from the Books of the most Orthodox Divines, and to such Expressions as may be met with in Scripture. The Beauties, therefore, which we are to look for in these Speeches, are not of a Poetical

tical Nature, nor so proper to fill the Mind with Sentiments of Grandeur, as with Thoughts of Devotion. The Passions, which they are design'd to raise, are a Divine Love and Religious Fear. The particular Beauty of the Speeches in the Third Book, consists in that Shortness and Perspicuity of Stile, in which the Poet has couched the greatest Mysteries of Christianity, and drawn together, in a regular Scheme, the whole Dispensation of Providence, with respect to Man. He has represented all the abstruse Doctrines of Predestination, Free-will and Grace, as also the great Points of Incarnation and Redemption, (which naturally grow up in a Poem that treats of the Fall of Man,) with great Energy of Expression, and in a clearer and stronger Light than I ever met with in any other Writer. As these Points are dry in themselves to the Generality of Readers, the concise and clear Manner in which he has treated them is very much to be admired, as is likewise that particular Art which he has made use of, in the interspersing of all those Graces of Poetry, which the Subject was capable of receiving.

THE Survey of the whole Creation, and of every thing that is transacted in it, is a Prospect worthy of Omniscience; and as much above that, in which *Virgil* has drawn his *Jupiter*, as the Christian Idea of the Supreme Being is more Rational and Sublime than that of the Heathens. The particular Objects on which he is described to have cast his Eye, are represented in the most beautiful and lively manner.

*Now had th' Almighty Father from above,
From the pure Emphyrean where he sits
High thron'd above all height, bent down his Eye,
His own Works and their Works at once to view.
About him all the Sanctities of Heav'n
Stood thick as Stars, and from his Sight receiv'd
Beatitude past utterance: On his Right
The radiant Image of his Glory sat,*

*His only Son ; On Earth he first beheld
 Our two first Parents, yet the only two
 Of Mankind, in the happy Garden plac'd,
 Reaping immortal fruits of Joy and Love,
 Uninterrupted Joy, unrival'd Love,
 In blissful Solitude ; he then survey'd
 Hell and the Gulph between, and Satan there
 Coasting the Wall of Heav'n on this Side Night
 In the dun air sublime, and ready now
 To stoop with wearied Wings and willing Feet
 On the bare outside of this World, that seem'd
 Firm Land imbosom'd without firmament,
 Uncertain which, in Ocean or in Air.
 Him God beholding from his prospect high,
 Wherein past, present, future he beholds,
 Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake.*

SATAN's Approach to the Confines of the Creation is finely imaged in the Beginning of the Speech, which immediately follows. The Effects of this Speech in the blessed Spirits, and in the Divine Person to whom it was address'd, cannot but fill the Mind of the Reader with a secret Pleasure and Complacency.

*Thus while God spake, ambrosial Fragrance fill'd
 All Heav'n, and in the blessed Spirits clearest
 Sense of new Joy ineffable diffus'd !
 Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
 Most glorious, in him all his Father shone
 Substantially express'd, and in his Face
 Divine Compassion visibly appear'd,
 Love without End, and without Measure Grace.*

I need not point out the Beauty of that Circumstance, wherein the whole Host of Angels are represented as standing mute ; nor show how proper the Occasion was to produce such a Silence in Heaven. The Close of this Divine Colloquy, with the Hymn of Angels that follows upon it, are so wonderfully beautiful and Poetical,

tical, that I should not forbear inserting the whole Passage, if the Bounds of my Paper would give me leave.

*No sooner had th' Almighty ceas'd, but all
The multitudes of Angels with a shout,
Loud as from Numbers without Number, sweet
As from blest Voices utt'ring Joy, Heav'n rung
With Jubilee, and loud Hosanna's fill'd
Th' eternal Regions; &c. &c.—*

SATAN's Walk upon the Outside of the Universe, which at a Distance appeared to him of a Globular Form, but, upon his nearer Approach, looked like an unbounded Plain, is natural and noble. As his Roaming upon the Frontiers of the Creation, between that Mass of Matter, which was wrought into a World, and that shapeless unformed Heap of Materials, which still lay in Chaos and Confusion, strikes the Imagination with something astonishingly great and wild. I have before spoken of the *Limbo of Vanity*, which the Poet places upon this outermost Surface of the Universe, and shall here explain my self more at large on that, and other Parts of the Poem, which are of the same shadowy Nature.

ARISTOTLE observes, that the Fable of an Epic Poem should abound in Circumstances that are both credible and astonishing; or, as the *French* Criticks choose to phrase it, the Fable should be filled with the Probable and the Marvellous. This Rule is as fine and just as any in *Aristotle's* whole Art of Poetry.

IF the Fable is only probable, it differs nothing from a true History; if it is only marvellous, it is no better than a Romance. The great Secret therefore of Heroick Poetry, is to relate such Circumstances, as may produce in the Reader at the same time both Belief and Astonishment. This is brought to pass in a
well

well chosen Fable, by the Account of such Things as have really happened, or at least of such Things as have happened, according to the received Opinions of Mankind. *Milton's* Fable is a Master-piece of this Nature; as the War in Heaven, the Condition of the fallen Angels, the State of Innocence, the Temptation of the Serpent, and the Fall of Man, though they are very astonishing in themselves, are not only credible, but actual Points of Faith.

THE next Method of reconciling Miracles with Credibility, is by a happy Invention of the Poet; as in particular, when he introduces Agents of a superior Nature, who are capable of effecting what is wonderful, and what is not to be met with in the ordinary Course of Things. *Ulysses's* Ship being turn'd into a Rock, and *Aeneas's* Fleet into a Shole of Water Nymphs, though they are very surprizing Accidents, are nevertheless probable, when we are told that they were the Gods who thus transformed them. It is this kind of Machinery which fills the Poems both of *Homer* and *Virgil* with such Circumstances as are wonderful, but not impossible, and so frequently produce in the Reader the most pleasing Passion that can rise in the Mind of Man, which is Admiration. If there be any Instance in the *Aeneid* liable to Exception upon this Account, it is in the Beginning of the Third Book, where *Aeneas* is represented as tearing up the Myrtle, that dropped Blood. To qualify this wonderful Circumstance, *Polydorus* tells a Story from the Root of the Myrtle, that the barbarous Inhabitants of the Country having pierced him with Spears and Arrows, the Wood which was left in his Body took Root in his Wounds, and gave Birth to that bleeding Tree. This Circumstance seems to have the Marvellous without the Probable, because it is represented as proceeding from natural Causes, without the Interposition of any God, or rather supernatural Power capable of producing it: The Spears and Arrows grow of themselves, without so much as the modern Help of an Enchantment. If we look into the Fiction of *Milton's* Fable,

Fable, though we find it full of surprising Incidents, they are generally suited to our Notions of the Things and Persons described, and tempered with a due Measure of Probability. I must only make an Exception to the *Limbo of Vanity*, with his Episode of *Sin* and *Death*, and some of the imaginary Persons in his *Chaos*. These Passages are astonishing, but not credible; the Reader cannot so far impose upon himself as to see a Possibility in them; they are the Description of Dreams and Shadows, not of Things or Persons. I know that many Criticks look upon the Stories of *Circe*, *Polypheme*, the *Sirens*, nay the whole *Odyssey* and *Iliad* to be Allegories; but allowing this to be true, they are Fables, which considering the Opinions of Mankind that prevailed in the Age of the Poets, might possibly have been according to the Letter. The Persons are such as might have acted what is ascribed to them, as the Circumstances, in which they are represented, might possibly have been Truths and Realities. This Appearance of Probability is so absolutely requisite in the greater Kinds of Poetry, that *Aristotle* observes the ancient Tragick Writers made use of the Names of such great Men as had actually lived in the World, tho' the Tragedy proceeded upon Adventures they were never engaged in, on purpose to make the Subject more credible. In a Word, besides the hidden Meaning of an Epic Allegory, the plain literal Sense ought to appear probable. The Story should be such, as an ordinary Reader may acquiesce in, whatever natural, moral, or political Truth may be discovered in it by Men of greater Penetration.

SATAN after having long wandered upon the Surface, or outmost Wall of the Universe, discovers at last a wide Gap in it, which led into the Creation, and is described as the Opening through which the Angels pass to and fro into the lower World, upon their Errands to Mankind. His Sitting upon the Brink of this Passage, and taking a Survey of the whole

whole Face of Nature, that appeared to him new and fresh in all its Beauties, with the Simile illustrating this Circumstance, fills the Mind of the Reader with as surprizing and glorious an Idea as any that arises in the whole Poem. He looks down into that vast Hollow of the Universe with the Eye, or (as *Milton* calls it in his first Book) with the Ken of an Angel. He surveys all the Wonders in this immense Amphitheatre that lie between both the Poles of Heaven, and takes in at one View the whole Round of the Creation.

HIS Flight between the several Worlds that shined on every Side of him, with the particular Description of the Sun, are set forth in all the Wantonness of a luxuriant Imagination. His Shape, Speech and Behaviour upon his transforming himself into an Angel of Light, are touched with exquisite Beauty. The Poet's Thought of directing *Satan* to the Sun, which in the vulgar Opinion of Mankind is the most conspicuous Part of the Creation, and the placing in it an Angel, is a Circumstance very finely contrived, and the more adjusted to a Poetical Probability, as it was a received Doctrine among the most famous Philosophers, that every Orb had its *Intelligence*; and as an Apostle in sacred Writ is said to have seen such an Angel in the Sun. In the Answer which this Angel returns to the disguised Evil Spirit, there is such a becoming Majesty, as is altogether suitable to a superior Being. The Part of it in which he represents himself as present at the Creation, is very noble in it self, and not only proper where it is introduced, but requisite to prepare the Reader for what follows in the Seventh Book.

*I saw when at his Word the formless Mass,
This World's Material Mould, came to a Heap:
Confusion heard his Voice, and wild uproar
Stood rul'd, stood vast infinitude confin'd;*

Till

*Till at his second bidding Darkness fled,
Light shone, &c.*

IN the following Part of the Speech he points out the Earth with such Circumstances, that the Reader can scarce forbear fancying himself employed on the same distant View of it.

*Look downward on the Globe whose hither Side
With light from hence, tho' but reflected, shines;
That Place is Earth, the Seat of Man, that light
His Day, &c.*

I must not conclude my Reflexions upon this third Book of *Paradise Lost*, without taking notice of that celebrated Complaint of *Milton* with which it opens, and which certainly deserves all the Praises that have been given it; tho', as I have before hinted, it may rather be looked upon as an Excrecence, than as an essential Part of the Poem. The same Observation might be applied to that beautiful Digression upon Hypocrisy, in the same Book.





SPECTATOR, No 321.

Nec satis est pulchra esse poemata, dulcia sunt. Hor.

THOSE who know how many Volumes have been written on the Poems of *Homer* and *Virgil*, will easily pardon the Length of my Discourse upon *Milton*. *The Paradise Lost* is looked upon, by the best Judges, as the greatest Production, or at least the noblest Work of Genius, in our Language, and therefore deserves to be set before an *English* Reader in its full Beauty. For this Reason, tho' I have endeavour'd to give a general Idea of its Graces and Imperfections in my six first Papers, I thought my self oblig'd to bestow one upon every Book in particular. The three first Books I have already dispatched, and am now entring upon the Fourth. I need not acquaint my Reader, that there are Multitudes of Beauties in this great Author, especially in the descriptive Parts of his Poem, which I have not touch'd upon; it being my Intention to point out those only, which appear to me in the most exquisite, or those which are not so obvious to ordinary Readers. Every one that has read the Criticks, who have written upon the *Odyssey*, the *Iliad*, and the *Aeneid*, knows very well, that though they agree in their Opinions of the great Beauties in those Poems, they have nevertheless each of them discovered several Master-Strokes, which have escap'd the Observation of the rest. In the same Manner, I question not, but any Writer, who shall treat of this Subject after me, may find several Beauties in *Milton*, which I have not taken notice of.

I must likewise observe, that as the greatest Masters of critical Learning differ from one another, as to some particular Points in an Epic Poem, I have not bound my self scrupulously to the Rules which any one of them has laid down upon that Art, but have taken the Liberty sometimes to join with one, and sometimes with another, and sometimes to differ from all of them, when I have thought that the Reason of the Thing was on my Side.

WE may consider the Beauties of the Fourth Book under three Heads. In the first are those Pictures of Still-Life, which we meet with in the Descriptions of *Eden*, *Paradise*, *Adam's Bower*, &c. In the next are the Machines, which comprehend the Speeches and Behaviour of the good and bad Angels. In the last is the Conduct of *Adam* and *Eve*, who are the principal Actors in the Poem.

IN the Description of *Paradise*, the Poet has observed *Aristotle's* Rule of lavishing all the Ornaments of Diction on the weak unactive Parts of the Fable, which are not supported by the Beauty of Sentiments and Characters. Accordingly the Reader may observe, that the Expressions are more florid and elaborate in these Descriptions, than in most other Parts of the Poem. I must further add, that tho' the *Drawings* of Gardens, Rivers, Rainbows, and the like dead Pieces of Nature, are justly censured in an heroic Poem, when they run out into an unnecessary Length; the Description of *Paradise* would have been faulty, had not the Poet been very particular in it, not only as it is the Scene of the principal Action, but as it is requisite to give us an Idea of that Happiness from which our first Parents fell. The Plan of it is wonderfully beautiful, and formed upon the short Sketch which we have of it, in Holy Writ. *Milton's* Exuberance of Imagination has poured forth such a Redundancy of Ornaments on this Seat of Happiness and Innocence, that it would be endless to point out each Particular.

I must not quit this Head, without farther observing, that there is scarce a Speech of *Adam* or *Eve* in the whole Poem, wherein the Sentiments and Allusions are not taken from this their delightful Habitation. The Reader, during their whole Course of Action, always finds himself in the Walks of *Paradise*. In short, as the Criticks have remarked, that in those Poems, wherein Shepherds are Actors, the Thoughts ought always to take a Tincture from the Woods, Fields and Rivers; so we may observe, that our first Parents seldom lose Sight of their happy Station in any Thing they speak or do; and, if the Reader will give me leave to use the Expression, that their Thoughts are always *Paradisiacal*.

WE are in the next Place to consider the Machines of the Fourth Book. *Satan* being now within Prospect of *Eden*, and looking round upon the Glories of the Creation, is filled with Sentiments different from those which he discovered whilst he was in Hell. The Place inspires him with Thoughts more adapted to it: He reflects upon the happy Condition from whence he fell, and breaks forth into a Speech that is softened with several transient Touches of Remorse and Self-Accusation: But at length, he confirms himself in Impenitence, and in his Design of drawing Men into his own State of Guilt and Misery. This Conflict of Passions is raised with a great deal of Art, as the Opening of his Speech to the Sun is very bold and noble.

*O thou that with surpassing Glory crown'd
 Look'st from thy sole Dominion like the God
 Of this new World, at whose Sight all the Stars
 Hide their diminish'd Heads, to thee I call
 But with no friendly Voice, and add thy Name
 O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy Beams
 That bring to my Remembrance from what State
 I fell, how glorious once above thy Sphere.*

THIS

THIS Speech is, I think, the finest that is ascribed to *Satan* in the whole Poem. The Evil Spirit afterwards proceeds to make his Discoveries concerning our first Parents, and to learn after what Manner they may be best attacked. His bounding over the Walls of *Paradise*; his sitting in the Shape of a Cormorant upon the Tree of Life, which stood in the Centre of it, and over-topped all the other Trees of the Garden; his alighting among the Herd of Animals, which are so beautifully represented as playing about *Adam* and *Eve*; together with his transforming himself into different Shapes, in order to hear their Conversation; are Circumstances that give an agreeable Surprize to the Reader, and devised with great Art, to connect that Series of Adventures in which the Poet has engaged this great Artificer of Fraud.

THE Thought of *Satan's* Transformation into a Cormorant, and placing himself on the Tree of Life, seems raised upon that Passage in the *Iliad*, where two Deities are described, as perching on the Top of an Oak in the Shape of Vulturs.

HIS planting himself at the Ear of *Eve* under the Form of a Toad, in order to produce vain Dreams and Imaginations, is a Circumstance of the same Nature; as his starting up in his own Form is wonderfully fine, both in the literal Description, and in the Moral which is concealed under it. His Answer upon his being discovered, and demanded to give an Account of himself, is conformable to the Pride and Intrepidity of his Character.

*Know ye not then, said Satan, fill'd with Scorn,
Know ye not Me? ye knew me once no Mate
For You, there sitting where you durst not soare;
Not to know Me argues your selves unknown,
The lowest of your throng;—*

ZEPHON's Rebuke, with the Influence it had on *Satan*, is exquisitely graceful and moral. *Satan* is afterwards led away to *Gabriel*, the chief of the guard-

dian Angels, who kept Watch in *Paradise*. His disdainful Behaviour on this Occasion is so remarkable a Beauty, that the most ordinary Reader cannot but take notice of it. *Gabriel's* discovering his Approach at a Distance, is drawn with great Strength and Liveliness of Imagination.

*O Friends, I hear the tread of nimble Feet
Hast'ning this Way, and now by glimps discern
Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade;
And with them comes a third of regal Port,
But faded splendor wan; who by his gait
And fierce demeanor seems the Prince of Hell,
Not likely to part hence without contest;
Stand firm, for in his look defiance lours.*

THE Conference between *Gabriel* and *Satan* abounds with Sentiments proper for the Occasion, and suitable to the Persons of the two Speakers. *Satan's* clothing himself with Terror, when he prepares for the Combat, is truly sublime, and at least equal to *Hommer's* Description of Discord celebrated by *Longinus*, or to that of Fame in *Virgil*, who are both represented with their Feet standing upon the Earth, and their Heads reaching above the Clouds.

*While thus he spake, th' Angelic Squadron bright
Turn'd fiery red, sharpening in mooned Horns
Their Phalanx, and began to hem him round
With ported Spears, &c.*

— On th' other Side, *Satan* alarm'd,
Collecting all his might dilated stood
Like *Teneriff* or *Atlas* unremov'd.
His Stature reach'd the Sky, and on his Crest
Sat horror phan'd; —————

I must here take notice, that *Milton* is every where full of Hints, and sometimes literal Translations, taken from the greatest of the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets. But this I may reserve for a Discourse by it self, because I would not break the Thread of these Speculations, that are designed for *English* Readers, with such Reflections as would be of no Use but to the Learned.

I must however observe in this Place, that the breaking off the Combat between *Gabriel* and *Satan*, by the hanging out of the golden Scales in Heaven, is a Refinement upon *Homer's* Thought, who tells us, that before the Battle between *Hector* and *Achilles*, *Jupiter* weighed the Event of it in a Pair of Scales. The Reader may see the whole Passage in the 22d *Iliad*.

VIRGIL, before the last decisive Combat, describes *Jupiter* in the same Manner, as weighing the Fates of *Turnus* and *Aeneas*. *Milton*, though he fetched this beautiful Circumstance from the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*, does not only insert it as a poetical Embellishment, like the Authors above-mentioned; but makes an artful Use of it for the proper carrying on of his Fable, and for the breaking off the Combat between the two Warriors, who were upon the Point of engaging. To this we may further add, that *Milton* is the more justified in this Passage, as we find the same noble Allegory in Holy Writ, where a wicked Prince, some few Hours before he was assaulted and slain, is said to have been weigh'd in the Scales, and to have been found wanting.

I must here take notice under the Head of the Machines, that *Uriel's* gliding down to the Earth upon a Sun-beam, with the Poet's Device to make him descend, as well in his Return to the Sun, as in his coming from it, is a Prettiness that might have been admired in a little fanciful Poet, but seems below the Genius of *Milton*. The Description of the Host of armed Angels walking their nightly Round in *Paradise*, is of another Spirit;

*So saying, on he led his radiant files,
Dazzling the Moon ;*

as that Account of the Hymns, which our first Parents used to hear them sing in these their Midnight Walks, is altogether Divine, and inexpressibly amusing to the Imagination.

WE are, in the last Place, to consider the Parts which *Adam* and *Eve* act in the fourth Book. The Description of them as they first appeared to *Satan*, is exquisitely drawn, and sufficient to make the fallen Angel gaze upon them with all that Astonishment, and those Emotions of Envy, in which he is represented.

*Two of far nobler Shape erect and tall,
God-like erect, with native honour clad
In naked Majesty seem'd lords of all,
And worthy seem'd, for in their looks Divine
The Image of their glorious Maker shone,
Truth, Wisdom, Sanctitude severe and pure ;
Severe, but in true filial Freedom plac'd :
For Contemplation he and Valour form'd,
For softness she and sweet attractive Grace ;
He for God only, she for God in him :
His fair large Front, and Eye sublime declar'd
Absolute Rule ; and Hyacinthin Locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering, but not beneath his Shoulders broad ;
She as a Vail down to her slender Waste
Her unadorned golden Tresses wore
Disshewel'd, but in wanton Ringlets wav'd.
So pass'd they naked on, nor shun'd the Sight
Of God or Angel, for they thought no ill :
So Hand in Hand they pass'd, the loveliest Pair
That ever since in love's Embraces met.*

THERE

THERE is a fine Spirit of Poetry in the Lines which follow, wherein they are described as sitting on a Bed of Flowers by the Side of a Fountain, amidst a mixed Assembly of Animals.

THE Speeches of these two first Lovers flow equally from Passion and Sincerity. The Professions they make to one another are full of Warmth; but at the same Time founded on Truth. In a Word, they are the Gallantries of *Paradise*.

—————*When Adam first of Men*—————

Sole Partner and sole Part of all these Joys.

Dearer thy self than all;—————

But let us ever praise him, and extol

His bounty, following our delightful task,

To prune those growing plants, and tend these flowers,

Which were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet.

To whom thus Eve reply'd. O thou for whom

And from whom I was formed, Flesh of thy Flesh,

And without whom am to no end, my Guide

And Head, what thou hast said is just and right,

For we to him indeed all Praises owe,

And daily Thanks, I chiefly who enjoy

So far the happier Lot enjoying thee

Preeminent by so much odds, while thou

Like Consort to thy self canst ne where find, &c.

THE remaining Part of *Eve's* Speech, in which she gives an Account of her self upon her first Creation, and the Manner in which she was brought to *Adam*, is I think as beautiful a Passage as any in *Milton*, or perhaps in any other Poet whatsoever. These Passages are all worked off with so much Art, that they are capable of pleasing the most delicate Reader, without offending the most severe.

That Day I oft remember, when from Sleep, &c.

A Poet of less Judgment and Invention than this great Author, would have found it very difficult to have filled these tender Parts of the Poem with Sentiments proper for a State of Innocence; to have described the Warmth of Love, and the Professions of it, without Artifice or Hyperbole; to have made the Man speak the most endearing Things, without descending from his natural Dignity, and the Woman receiving them without departing from the Modesty of her Character; in a Word, to adjust the Prerogatives of Wisdom and Beauty, and make each appear to the other in its proper Force and Loveliness. This mutual Subordination of the two Sexes is wonderfully kept up in the whole Poem, as particularly in the Speech of *Eve* I have before-mentioned, and upon the Conclusion of it in the following Lines.

*So spake our general Mother, and with Eyes
Of conjugal Attraction unprov'd,
And meek surrender, half embracing lean'd
On our first Father, half her swelling breast
Naked met his under the flowing Gold
Of her loose Tresses hid; he in Delight
Both of her Beauty and submissive Charms
Smil'd with Superior Love, ———*

THE Poet adds, that the Devil turned away with Envy at the Sight of so much Happiness.

WE have another View of our first Parents in their Evening Discourses, which is full of pleasing Images, and Sentiments suitable to their Condition and Characters. The Speech of *Eve*, in particular, is dress'd up in such a soft and natural Turn of Words and Sentiments, as cannot be sufficiently admired.

I shall close my Reflexions upon this Book, with observing the masterly Transition which the Poet makes to their Evening Worship, in the following Lines.

Thus

Thus at their steady lodge arriv'd, both flood,
Both turn'd, and under open Sky ador'd
The God that made both Sky, Air, Earth and Heav'n
Which they beheld, the Moon's resplendent Globe,
And Starry Pole: Thou also mad'st the Night,
Maker omnipotent, and thou the Day, &c.

MOST of the modern heroick Poets have imitated the Ancients, in beginning a Speech without premising, that the Person said thus or thus: but as it is easy to imitate the Ancients in the Omission of two or three Words, it requires Judgment to do it in such a Manner as they shall not be missed, and that the Speech may begin naturally without them. There is a fine Instance of this Kind out of *Homer*, in the Twenty third Chapter of *Longinus*.



SPECTATOR, No 327.

—*Major rerum mihi nascitur ordo.*

Virg.

WE were told in the foregoing Book how the Evil Spirit practis'd upon *Eve* as she lay asleep, in order to inspire her with Thoughts of Vanity, Pride and Ambition. The Author, who shews a wonderful Art throughout his whole Poem, in preparing the Reader for the several Occurrences that arise in it, founds upon the above-mention'd Circumstance the First Part of the Fifth Book. *Adam* upon his Awakening finds *Eve* still asleep, with an unusual Discomposure in her Looks. The Posture in which he regards her, is described with a Tenderness not to be express'd, as the Whisper with which he awakens her is the softest that ever was convey'd to a Lover's Ear.

His

His wonder was to find unwaken'd Eve
 With Tresses compos'd, and glowing cheek
 As through unquiet rest : he on his side
 Leaning half-rai'd, with looks of cordial love
 Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld
 Beauty which, whether waking or asleep,
 Shot forth peculiar Graces : then with voice
 Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
 Her Hand soft touching, whisper'd thus : Awake
 My fairest, my espous'd, my latest found,
 Heav'n's last best gift, my ever new delight,
 Awake : the morning shines, and the fresh field
 Calls us, we lose the prime to mark how spring
 Our tended plants, how blows the Citron Grove,
 What drops the Myrrh, and what the balmy Reed ;
 How Nature paints her colours ; how the Bee
 Sits on the bloom, extracting liquid sweet.
 Such Whisp'ring wak'd her, but with startled Eye
 On Adam, whom embracing, thus she spake.
 O Sole in whom my thoughts find all Repose,
 My glory, my perfection, glad I see
 Thy face, and morn return'd ———

I cannot but take notice that Milton, in the Conferences between Adam and Eve, had his Eye very frequently upon the Book of Canticles, in which there is a noble Spirit of Eastern Poetry, and very often not unlike what we meet with in Homer, who is generally placed near the Age of Solomon. I think there is no Question but the Poet in the preceeding Speech remember'd those two Passages which are spoken on the like Occasion, and fill'd with the same pleasing Images of Nature.

MY beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away ; For lo, the winter

i:

is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the Earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the Voice of the Turtle is heard in our Land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the Vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my Love, my fair one, and come away.

COME, my beloved, let us go forth into the Field; let us get up early to the Vineyards, let us see if the Vine flourish, whether the tender Grape appear, and the Pomegranates bud forth.

His preferring the Garden of Eden to that

—Where the Sapient King
Held Dalliance with his fair Egyptian Spouse,

shews that the Poet had this delightful Scene in his Mind.

EVE's Dream is full of those high Conceits engendering Pride, which, we are told, the Devil endeavour'd to instil into her. Of this Kind is that Part of it where she fancies herself awaken'd by Adam in the following beautiful Lines.

Why sleepest thou Eve? now is the pleasant time,
The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
To the night-warbling bird, that now awake
Tunes sweetest his love-labour'd song; now reigns
Full orb'd the moon, and with more pleasing light
Shadowy sets off the face of things: In vain
If none regard; Heav'n wakes with all his eyes
Whom to behold but thee, Nature's desire,
In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze!

An injudicious Poet would have made Adam talk thro' the whole Work, in such Sentiments as these.

But Flattery and Falshood are not the Courtship of Milton's *Adam*, and could not be heard by *Eve* in her State of Innocence, excepting only in a Dream produc'd on purpose to taint her Imagination. Other vain Sentiments of the same Kind in this Relation of her Dream, will be obvious to every Reader. Tho' the Catastrophe of the Poem is finely presaged on this Occasion, the Particulars of it are so artfully shadow'd, that they do not anticipate the Story which follows in the Ninth Book. I shall only add, that tho' the Vision it self is founded upon Truth, the Circumstances of it are full of that Wildness and Inconsistency which are natural to a Dream. *Adam*, conformable to his superior Character for Wisdom, instructs and comforts *Eve* upon this Occasion.

*So cheer'd be his fair Spouse, and she was cheer'd,
But silently a gentle tear let fall
From either eye, and wip'd them with her hair;
Two other precious drops that ready stood,
Each in their crystal sluice, he ere they fell
Kiss'd, as the gracious Signs of sweet remorse
And pious awe, that fear'd to have offended.*

THE Morning Hymn is written in Imitation of one of those Psalms, where, in the Overflowings of Gratitude and Praise, the Psalmist calls not only upon the Angels, but upon the most conspicuous Parts of the inanimate Creation, to join with him in extolling their Common Maker. Invocations of this Nature fill the Mind with glorious Ideas of God's Works, and awaken that divine Enthusiasm, which is so natural to Devotion. But if this calling upon the dead Parts of Nature, is at all Times a proper Kind of Worship, it was in a particular Manner suitable to our first Parents, who had the Creation fresh upon their Minds, and had not seen the various Dispensations of Providence, nor consequently could be acquainted with those many

Topicks

Topicks of Praise which might afford Matter to the Devotions of their Posterity. I need not remark the beautiful Spirit of Poetry, which runs through this whole Hymn, nor the Holiness of that Resolution with which it concludes.

HAVING already mentioned those Speeches which are assigned to the Persons in this Poem, I proceed to the Description which the Poet gives of *Raphael*. His Departure from before the Throne, and his Flight thro' the Choirs of Angels, is finely imaged. As *Milton* every where fills his Poem with Circumstances that are marvellous and astonishing, he describes the Gate of Heaven as framed after such a Manner that it open'd of it self upon the Approach of the Angel who was to pass through it.

— 'till at the Gate
Of Heav'n arriv'd, the Gate self-open'd wide,
On golden hinges turning, as by work
Divine th' Sov'reign Architect had framed.

THE Poet here seems to have regarded two or three Passages on the 18th *Iliad*, as that in particular, where, speaking of *Vulcan*, *Homer* says, that he had made twenty *Tripodes* running on Golden Wheels, which, upon Occasion, might go of themselves to the Assembly of the Gods, and, when there was no more Use for them, return again after the same Manner. *Scaliger* has rallied *Homer* very severely upon this Point, as *M. Dacier* has endeavoured to defend it. I will not pretend to determine, whether in this Particular of *Homer*, the Marvellous does not lose Sight of the Probable. As the miraculous Workmanship of *Milton's* Gates is not so extraordinary as this of the *Tripodes*, so I am persuaded he would not have mentioned it, had not he been supported in it by a Passage in the Scripture, which speaks of Wheels in Heav'n that had Life in them, and moved of themselves, or stood still, in

Conformity with the Cherubims, whom they accompanied.

THERE is no Question but *Milton* had this Circumstance in his Thoughts, because in the following Book he describes the Chariot of the *Messiah* with *living Wheels*, according to the Plan in *Ezekiel's* Vision.

—Forth rush'd with whirwind sound
The Chariot of paternal Deity,
Flashing thick Flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,
It self instinct with Spirit—

I question not but *Bossu*, and the two *Daciers*, who are for vindicating every Thing that is censured in *Homer*, by something parallel in Holy Writ, would have been very well pleased had they thought of confronting *Vulcan's Tripodes* with *Ezekiel's* Wheels.

RAPHAEL's Descent to the Earth, with the Figure of his Person, is represented in very lively Colours. Several of the *French, Italian, and English* Poets have given a Loose to their Imaginations in the Description of Angels: But I do not remember to have met with any so finely drawn, and so conformable to the Notions which are given of them in Scripture, as this in *Milton*. After having set him forth in all his heavenly Plumage, and represented him as alighting upon the Earth, the Poet concludes his Description with a Circumstance, which is altogether new, and imagined with the greatest Strength of Fancy.

—Like *Maia's* Son he stood
And shook his plumes, that Heav'nly fragrance fill'd
The Circuit wide—

RAPHAEL's Reception by the Guardian Angels; his passing through the Wilderness of Sweets; his distant Appearance to *Adam*; have all the Graces that poetry is capable of bestowing. The Author afterwards
gives

gives us a particular Description of *Eve* in her Domestick Employments.

*So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent,
What choice to chuse for delicacy best,
What order, so contriv'd as not to mix
Tastes, not well join'd inelegant, but bring
Taste after taste, upheld with kindest change;
Bestirs her then, &c.*

THOUGH in this, and other Parts of the same Book, the Subject is only the Housewifry of our First Parent, it is set off with so many pleasing Images and strong Expressions, as make it none of the least agreeable Parts in this Divine Work.

THE natural Majesty of *Adam*, and at the same Time his submissive Behaviour to the superior Being, who had vouchsafed to be his Guest; the solemn *Hail* which the Angel bestows on the Mother of Mankind, with the Figure of *Eve* ministring at the Table, are Circumstances which deserve to be admired.

RAPHAEL's Behaviour is every Way suitable to the Dignity of his Nature, and to that Character of a Sociable Spirit, with which the Author has so judiciously introduced him. He had received Instructions to converse with *Adam*, as one Friend converses with another, and to warn him of the Enemy, who was contriving his Destruction: Accordingly he is represented as sitting down at a Table with *Adam*, and eating of the Fruits of *Paradise*. The Occasion naturally leads him to his Discourse on the Food of Angels. After having thus entered into Conversation with Man upon more indifferent Subjects, he warns him of his Obedience, and makes a natural Transition to the History of that fallen Angel, who was employed in the Circumvention of our first Parents.

Had I followed Monsieur *Bossu's* Method, in my first Paper on *Milton*, I should have dated the Action of *Paradise Lost* from the Beginning of *Raphael's* Speech in this Book, as he supposes the Action of the *Æneid* to begin in the second Book of that Poem. I could allege many Reasons for my drawing the Action of the *Æneid* rather from its immediate Beginning in the first Book, than from its remote Beginning in the second, and shew why I have considered the sacking of *Troy* as an *Episode*, according to the common Acceptation of that Word. But as this would be a dry unentertaining Piece of Criticism, and perhaps unnecessary to those who have read my first Paper, I shall not enlarge upon it. Which ever of the Notions be true, the Unity of *Milton's* Action is preserved according to either of them; whether we consider the Fall of Man in its immediate Beginning, as proceeding from the Resolutions taken in the infernal Council; or in its more remote Beginning, or proceeding from the first Revolt of the Angels in Heaven. The Occasion which *Milton* assigns for this Revolt, as it is founded on Hints in Holy Writ, and on the Opinion of some great Writers, so it was the most proper that the Poet could have made use of.

THE Revolt in Heaven is described with great Force of Indignation, and a fine Variety of Circumstances. The learned Reader cannot but be pleased with the Poet's Imitation of *Homer* in the last of the following Lines.

*At length into the limits of the North
They came, and Satan took his Royal Seat
High on a Hill, far blazing, as a Mount
Rais'd on a Mount with Pyramids and Tow'rs
From Diamond Quarries hewn, and Rocks of Gold,
The Palace of great Lucifer, (so call
That Structure in the Dialect of Men
Interpreted) —*

HOMER mentions Persons and Things, which he tells us in the Language of the Gods are call'd by different Names from those they go by in the Language of Men. Milton has imitated him with his usual Judgment in this particular Place, wherein he has likewise the Authority of Scripture to justify him. The Part of *Abdiel*, who was the only Spirit that in this infinite Host of Angels preserved his Allegiance to his Maker, exhibits to us a noble Moral of religious-Singularity. The Zeal of the Seraphim breaks forth in a becoming Warmth of Sentiments of Expressions, as the Character which is given us of him denotes that generous Scorn and Intrepidity which attends heroic Virtue. The Author doubtless designed it as a Pattern to those who live among Mankind in their present Stage of Degeneracy and Corruption.

*So spake the Seraph Abdiel faithful found,
Among the faithless, faithful only he ;
Among innumerable false, unmov'd,
Unshaken, unseduc'd, untterrify'd ;
His Loyalty he kept, his Love, his Zeal :
Nor Number, nor Example with him wrought
To swerve from Truth, or change his constant mind.
Though single. From amidst them forth he pass'd,
Long Way through hostile Scorn, which he sustain'd
Superior, nor of Violence fear'd ought ;
And with retorted Scorn his Back he turn'd
On those proud Towers to swift Destruction doom'd.*





SPECTATOR, No 333.

— vocat in certamina Divos.

Virg.

WE are now entering upon the Sixth Book of *Paradise Lost*, in which the Poet describes the Battle of Angels; having raised his Reader's Expectation, and prepar'd him for it by several Passages in the preceding Books. I omitted quoting these Passages in my Observations on the former Books, having purposely reserved them for the Opening of this, the Subject of which gave Occasion to them. The Author's Imagination was so inflamed with this great Scene of Action, that wherever he speaks of it, he rises, if possible, above himself. Thus where he mentions *Satan* in the Beginning of his Poem.

*— Him the Almighty Power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Skie,
With hideous ruin and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In Adamantine Chains and Penal Fire,
Who durst despise the Omnipotent to Arms.*

WE have likewise several noble hints of it in the infernal Conference.

*O Prince, O Chief of many throned Powers
That led th' embattel'd Seraphim to War,
Too well I see and rue the dire event,*

*That with sad overthrow and foul defeat
Hath lost us Heav'n and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low.
But see the angry Victor hath recall'd
His Ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of Heav'n: The Sulphurous bail
Shot after us in Storm, o'erblown hath laid
The fiery Surge, that from the Precipice
Of Heav'n receiv'd us falling, and the Thunder
Wing'd with red lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his Shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.*

THERE are several other very sublime Images on the same Subject in the First Book, as also in the Second.

*What when we fled amain, pursu'd and strook
With Heav'n's afflicting Thunder, and besought
The Deep to shelter us; this Hell then seem'd
A refuge from those wounds——*

IN short, the Poet never mentions any thing of this Battle, but in such Images of Greatness and Terror as are suitable to the Subject. Among several others, I cannot forbear quoting that Passage where the Power who is describ'd as presiding over the Chaos, speaks in the Third Book.

*Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old
With fault'ring speech and visage compos'd.
Answer'd, I know thee, Stranger, who thou art,
That mighty leading Angel, who of late
Made head against Heav'n's King, tho' overthrown.
I saw and heard; for such a num'rous Host
Fled not in Silence through the frighted Deep*

With

*With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
 Confusion worse confounded; and Heav'n's Gates
 Pour'd out by Millions her victorious Bands
 Pursuing—*

IT required great Pregnancy of Invention; and Strength of Imagination, to fill this Battle with such Circumstances as should raise and astonish the Mind of the Reader; and, at the same time, an Exactness of Judgment to avoid every thing that might appear light or trivial. Those who look into *Homer*, are surpris'd to find his Battles still rising one above another, and improving in Horror, to the Conclusion of the *Iliad*. *Milton's* Fight of Angels is wrought up with the same Beauty. It is usher'd in with such Signs of Wrath as are suitable to Omnipotence incensed. The first Engagement is carried on under a Cope of Fire, occasion'd by the Flights of innumerable burning Darts and Arrows which are discharged from either Host. The second Onset is still more terrible, as it is filled with those artificial Thunders, which seem to make the Victory doubtful, and produce a kind of Consternation even in the Good Angels. This is follow'd by the tearing up of Mountains and Promontories; 'till, in the last Place, the *Messiah* comes forth in the Fulness of Majesty and Terror. The Pomp of his Appearance, amidst the Roarings of his Thunders, the Flashes of his Lightnings, and the Noise of his Chariot-Wheels, is described with the utmost Flights of Humane Imagination.

THERE is nothing in the first and last Day's Engagement which does not appear natural, and agreeable enough to the Ideas most Readers would conceive of a Fight between two Armies of Angels.

THE second Day's Engagement is apt to startle an Imagination, which has not been raised and qualified for such a Description, by the reading of the ancient Poets, and of *Homer* in particular. It was certainly

certainly a very bold Thought in our Author, to ascribe the first Use of Artillery to the Rebel Angels. But as such a pernicious Invention may be well supposed to have proceeded from such Authors, so it entered very properly into the Thoughts of that Being, who is all along described as aspiring to the Majesty of his Maker. Such Engines were the only Instruments he could have made use of to imitate those Thunders, that in all Poetry, both Sacred and Profane, are represented as the Arms of the Almighty. The tearing up the Hills was not altogether so daring a Thought as the former. We are, in some measure, prepared for such an Incident by the Description of the Giants War, which we meet with among the ancient Poets. What still made this Circumstance the more proper for the Poet's Use, is the Opinion of many Learned Men, that the Fable of the Giants War, which makes so great a Noise in Antiquity, and gave Birth to the sublimest Description in *Hesiod's* Works, was an Allegory founded upon this very Tradition of a Fight between the good and bad Angels.

IT may, perhaps, be worth while to consider with what Judgment *Milton*, in this Narration, has avoided every thing that is mean and trivial in the Descriptions of the *Latin* and *Greek* Poets; and, at the same time, improv'd every great Hint which he met with in their Works upon this Subject. *Homer* in that Passage, which *Longinus* has celebrated for its Sublimeness, and which *Virgil* and *Ovid* have copied after him, tells us that the Giants threw *Ossa* upon *Olympus*, and *Pelion* upon *Ossa*. He adds an Epithet to *Pelion* (*ειρώεισπονδος*) which very much swells the Idea, by bringing up to the Reader's Imagination all the Woods that grew upon it. There is further a great Beauty in his singling out by Name these three remarkable Mountains, so well known to the *Greeks*. This last is such a Beauty as the Scene of *Milton's* War could not possibly furnish him with.

with. *Claudian*, in his Fragment upon the Giants War, has given full Scope to that Wildness of Imagination which was natural to him. He tells us, that the Giants tore up whole Islands by the Roots, and threw them at the Gods. He describes one of them in particular taking up *Lemnos* in his Arms, and whirling it to the Skies, with all *Vulcan's* Shop in the midst of it. Another tears up Mount *Ida*, with the River *Enipeus*, which ran down the Sides of it; but the Poet not content to describe him with this Mountain upon his Shoulders, tells us, that the River flow'd down his Back, as he held it up in that Posture. It is visible to every judicious Reader, that such Ideas favour more of Burlesque than of the Sublime. They proceed from a Wantonness of Imagination, and rather divert the Mind than astonish it. *Milton* has taken every thing that is Sublime in these several Passages, and composes out of them the following great Image.

*From their Foundations loosning to and fro
They pluck'd the seated Hills with all their load,
Rocks, Waters, Woods, and by the shaggy tops
Up-lifting bore them in their Hands :—*

WE have the full Majesty of *Homer* in this short Description, improved by the Imagination of *Claudian*, without its Puerilities.

I need not point out the Description of the fallen Angels seeing the Promontories hanging over their Heads in such a dreadful Manner, with the other numberless Beauties in this Book, which are so conspicuous, that they cannot escape the Notice of the most ordinary Reader.

THERE are indeed so many wonderful Strokes of Poetry in this Book, and such a Variety of sublime Ideas, that it would have been impossible to have given them a Place within the Bounds of this Paper. Besides that, I find it in a great measure done

to my Hand at the End of my Lord Roscommon's Essay on Translated Poetry. I shall refer my Reader thither for some of the Master-Strokes in the Sixth Book of *Paradise Lost*, though at the same time there are many others which that noble Author has not taken notice of.

MILTON, notwithstanding the sublime Genius he was Master of, has in this Book drawn to his Assistance all the Helps he could meet with among the ancient Poets. The Sword of *Michael*, which makes so great a Havock among the bad Angels, was given him, we are told, out of the Armory of God.

— But the Sword
Of *Michael* from the Armory of God
Was giv'n him temper'd so, that neither keen
Nor solid might resist that edge: it met
The Sword of *Satan* with steep force to smite
Descending, and in half cut shivers, —

THIS Passage is a Copy of that in *Virgil*, wherein the Poet tells us, that the Sword of *Aeneas*, which was given him by a Deity, broke into Pieces the Sword of *Turnus*, which came from a mortal Forge. As the Moral in this Place is Divine, so by the way we may observe, that the bestowing on a Man who is favour'd by Heav'n such an Allegorical Weapon, is very conformable to the old Eastern Way of Thinking. Not only *Homer* has made use of it, but we find the Jewish Hero in the Book of *Maccabees*, who had fought the Battles of the chosen People with so much Glory and Success, receiving in his Dream a Sword from the Hand of the Prophet *Jeremiah*. The following Passage, wherein *Satan* is described as wounded by the Sword of *Michael*, is in Imitation of *Homer*.

*The girding Sword with discontinuous wound
 Pass'd through him, but th' Ethereal substance clos'd
 Not long divisible, and from the gash
 A stream of Nectarous humour issuing flow'd
 Sanguin, such as celestial Spirits may bleed,
 And all his Armour stain'd*—

HOMER tells us in the same manner, that upon Diomedes wounding the Gods, there flow'd from the Wound an *Ichor*, or pure kind of Blood, which was not bred from Mortal Viands; and that tho' the Pain was exquisitely great, the Wound soon clos'd up and healed in those Beings who are vested with Immortality.

I question not but *Milton* in his Description of his furious *Moloch* flying from the Battle, and bellowing with the Wound he had received, had his Eye on *Mars* in the *Iliad*, who, upon his being wounded, is represented as retiring out of the Fight, and making an Outcry louder than that of a whole Army when it begins the Charge. *Homer* adds, that the *Greeks* and *Trojans*, who were engaged in a general Battle, were terrified on each Side with the bellowing of this wounded Deity. The Reader will easily observe how *Milton* has kept all the Horror of this Image without running into the Ridicule of it.

*Where the might of Gabriel sought,
 And with fierce Ensigns pierc'd the deep array
 Of Moloch furious King, who him des'd,
 And at his Chariot wheels to drag him bound
 Threaten'd, nor from the Holy One of Heav'n
 Refrain'd his Tongue blasphemous; but anon
 Down cloven to the waste, with shatter'd Arms
 And uncouth pain fled bellowing.*—

MILTON

MILTON has likewise raised his Description in this Book with many Images taken out of the Poetical Parts of Scripture. The Messiah's Chariot, as I have before taken notice, is form'd upon a Vision of *Ezekiel*, who, as *Grotius* observes, has very much in him of *Homer's* Spirit in the Poetical Parts of his Prophecy.

THE following Lines in that glorious Commission which is given the Messiah to extirpate the Host of Rebel Angels, is drawn from a sublime Passage in the Psalms.

*Go then thou mightiest in thy Father's might,
Ascend my Chariot, guide the rapid wheels
That shake Heav'n's basis, bring forth all my War,
My Bow, my Thunder, my almighty Arms,
Gird on thy Sword on thy puissant Thigh.*

THE Reader will easily discover many other Strokes of the same Nature.

THERE is no question but *Milton* had heated his Imagination with the Fight of the Gods in *Homer*, before he entered upon this Engagement of the Angels. *Homer* there gives us a Scene of Men, Heroes, and Gods mixed together in Battle. *Mars* animates the contending Armies, and lifts up his Voice in such a manner, that it is heard distinctly amidst all the Shouts and Confusion of the Fight. *Jupiter* at the same time thunders over their Heads; while *Neptune* raises such a Tempest, that the whole Field of Battle and all the Tops of the Mountains, shake about them. The Poet tells us, that *Pluto* himself, whose Habitation was in the very Center of the Earth, was so affrighted at the Shock, that he leapt from his Throne. *Homer* afterwards describes *Vulcan* as pouring down a Storm of Fire upon the River *Xanthus*, and *Minerva* as throwing a Rock at *Mars*; who, he tells us, covered seven Acres in his Fall.

AS *Homer* has introduced into his Battle of the Gods every thing that is great and terrible in Nature, *Milton* has filled his Fight of Good and Bad Angels with all the like Circumstances of Horror. The Shout of Armies, the Rattling of Brazen Chariots, the Hurling of Rocks and Mountains, the Earthquake, the Fire, the Thunder, are all of them employ'd to lift up the Reader's Imagination, and give him a suitable Idea of so great an Action. With what Art has the Poet represented the whole Body of the Earth trembling, even before it was created.

*All Heaven resounded, and bad Earth been then,
All Earth had to its Center shook——*

IN how sublime and just a Manner does he afterwards describe the whole Heaven shaking under the Wheels of the *Messiah's* Chariot, with that Exception to the Throne of God?

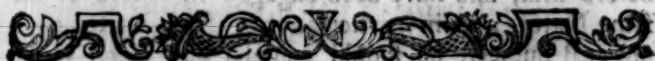
*—— Under his burning Wheels
The steadfast Empyrean shook throughout;
All but the Throne it self of God——*

NOTWITHSTANDING the *Messiah* appears clothed with so much Terror and Majesty, the Poet has still found Means to make his Readers conceive an Idea of him beyond what he himself was able to describe.

*Yet half his Strength he put not forth, but checkt
His thunder in mid Volly, for he meant
Not to destroy, but root them out of Heav'n.*

IN a Word, *Milton's* Genius, which was so great in itself, and so strengthened by all the Helps of Learning, appears in this Book every way equal to his Subject, which was the most sublime that could enter
into

into the Thoughts of a Poet. As he knew all the Arts of Affecting the Mind, he knew it was necessary to give it certain Resting-places and Opportunities of recovering itself from time to time: He has therefore with great Address interspersed several Speeches, Reflexions, Similitudes, and the like Reliefs, to diversify his Narration, and ease the Attention of the Reader, that he might come fresh to his great Action; and by such a Contrast of Ideas, have a more lively Taste of the nobler Parts of his Description.



SPECTATOR, No 339.

— *Ut his exordia primis*
Omnia, et ipse tener Mundi concreverit orbis.
Tum durare solum et discludere Nerea ponto
Cæperit, & rerum paulatim sumere formas. Virg.

LONGINUS has observed, that there may be a Loftiness in Sentiments, where there is no Passion, and brings Instances out of ancient Authors to support this his Opinion. The Pathetick, as that great Critick observes, may animate and inflame the Sublime, but is not essential to it. Accordingly, as he further remarks, we very often find that those who excel most in stirring up the Passions, very often want the Talent of writing in the great and sublime Manner; and so on the contrary. Milton has shewn himself a Master in both these Ways of Writing. The seventh Book, which we are now entering upon, is an Instance of that Sublime which is not mix'd and work'd up with Passion. The Author appears in a kind of composed and sedate Majesty; and tho' the

Sentiments do not give so great an Emotion as those in the former Book, they abound with as magnificent Ideas. The sixth Book, like a troubled Ocean, represents Greatness in Confusion; the seventh affects the Imagination like the Ocean in a Calm, and fills the Mind of the Reader, without producing in it any thing like Tumult or Agitation.

THE Critick above-mentioned, among the Rules which he lays down for succeeding in the sublime way of writing, proposes to his Reader, that he should imitate the most celebrated Authors who have gone before him, and have been engaged in Works of the same Nature; as in particular that if he writes on a poetical Subject, he should consider how *Homer* would have spoken on such an Occasion. By this Means one great Genius often catches the Flame from another, and writes in his Spirit without copying servilely after him. There are a thousand shining Passages in *Virgil*, which have been lighted up by *Homer*.

MILTON, tho' his own natural Strength of Genius was capable of furnishing out a perfect Work, has doubtless very much raised and ennobled his Conceptions, by such an Imitation as that which *Longinus* has recommended.

IN this Book, which gives us an Account of the Six Days Works, the Poet received but very few Assistances from Heathen Writers, who were Strangers to the Wonders of Creation. But as there are many glorious Strokes of Poetry upon this Subject in Holy Writ, the Author has numberless Allusions to them through the whole Course of this Book. The great Critick I have before mentioned, though an Heathen, has taken notice of the sublime Manner in which the Lawgiver of the *Jews* has described the Creation in the Fifth Chapter of *Genesis*; and there are many other Passages in Scripture, which rise up to the same Majesty, where this Subject is touched upon. *Milton* has shewn his Judgment very remarkably, in making use of such of these as were proper for his Poem, and

in

in duly qualifying those high Strains of Eastern Poetry, which were suited to Readers whose Imaginations were set to an higher Pitch, than those of colder Climates.

ADAM's Speech to the Angel, wherein he desires an Account of what had passed within the Regions of Nature before the Creation, is very great and solemn. The following Lines, in which he tells him, that the Day is not too far spent for him to enter upon such a Subject, are exquisite in their Kind.

*And the Great Light of Day yet wants to run
Much of his race though steep, suspense in Heaven
Held by thy voice, thy potent voice he hears,
And longer will delay to hear thee tell
His Generation, &c.*

THE Angel's encouraging our First Parents in a modest Pursuit after Knowledge, with the Causes which he assigns for the Creation of the World, are very just and beautiful. The *Messiah*, by whom, as we are told in Scripture, the Worlds were made, comes forth in the Power of his Father, surrounded with an Host of Angels, and clothed with such a Majesty as becomes his entering upon a Work, which, according to our Conceptions, appears the utmost Exertion of Omnipotence. What a beautiful Description has our Author raised upon that Hint in one of the Prophets ;
And behold there came four Chariots out from between two Mountains, and the Mountains were Mountains of Brass ?

*About his Chariot numberless were pour'd
Cherub and Seraph, Potentates and Thrones,
And Virtues, winged Spirits, and Chariots wing'd,
From the Armoury of God, where stand of old
Myriads between two brazen Mountains lodg'd
Against a solemn day, harness'd at hand ;*

Celestial

*Celestial Equipage ; and now came forth
 Spontaneous, for within them Spirit liv'd
 Attendant on their Lord: Heav'n open'd wide
 Her ever during Gates, Harmonious found
 On golden Hinges moving——*

I have before taken notice of these Chariots of God, and of these Gates of Heaven, and shall here only add, that *Homer* gives us the same Idea of the latter as opening of themselves, tho' he afterwards takes off from it, by telling us, that the *Hours* first of all removed those prodigious Heaps of Clouds which lay as a Barrier before them.

I do not know any Thing in the whole Poem more sublime than the Description which follows, where the Messiah is represented at the Head of his Angels, as looking down into the *Chaos*, calming its Confusion, riding into the Midst of it, and drawing the first Outline of the Creation.

*On Heav'nly ground they stood, and from the store
 They view'd the vast immeasurable Abyss
 Outrageous as a Sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
 Up from the bottom turn'd by furious winds
 And surging Waves, as Mountains to assault
 Heav'n's height, and with the Center mix the Pole.
 Silence ye troubled Waves, and thou Deep, Peace,
 Said then th' Omnific word, your Discord end :
 Nor said, but on the wings of Cherubim
 Up-lifted, in paternal Glory rode
 Far into Chaos, and the World unborn ;
 For Chaos heard his voice : him all his train
 Follow'd in bright Procession to behold
 Creation, and the wonders of his might.
 Then said the fervid Wheels, and in his hand
 He took the golden Compasses, prepared*

*In God's eternal Store, to circumscribe
This Universe, and all created things :
One foot be center'd, and the other turn'd,
Round through the vast profundity obscure,
And said, thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,
This be thy just Circumference, O World.*

THE Thought of the Golden Compasses is conceived altogether in *Homer's* Spirit, and is a very noble Incident in this wonderful Description. *Homer*, when he speaks of the Gods, ascribes to them several Arms and Instruments with the same Greatness of Imagination. Let the Reader only peruse the Description of *Minerwa's Ægis*, or Buckler, in the Fifth Book of the *Iliad*, with her Spear which would overturn whole Squadrons, and her Helmet, that was sufficient to cover an Army drawn out of an hundred Cities : The Golden Compasses in the above-mentioned Passage appear a very natural Instrument in the Hand of him, whom *Plato* somewhere calls the Divine Geometrician. As Poetry delights in clothing abstracted Ideas in Allegories and sensible Images, we find a magnificent Description of the Creation form'd after the same manner in one of the Prophets, wherein he describes the Almighty Architect as measuring the Waters in the Hollow of his Hand, meteing out the Heavens with his Span, comprehending the Dust of the Earth in a Measure, weighing the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Balance. Another of them describing the Supreme Being in this great Work of Creation, represents him as laying the Foundations of the Earth, and stretching a Line upon it. And in another Place as garnishing the Heavens, stretching out the North over the empty Place, and hanging the Earth upon Nothing. This last noble Thought *Milton* has express'd in the following Verse.

And

And Earth self-balanc'd on her Centre hung.

THE Beauties of Description in this Book lie so very thick, that it is impossible to enumerate them in this Paper. The Poet has employed on them the whole Energy of our Tongue. The several great Scenes of the Creation rise up to view one after another, in such a Manner, that the Reader seems present at this wonderful Work, and to assist among the Choirs of Angels, who are the Spectators of it. How glorious is the Conclusion of the first Day.

——— *Thus was the first day Ev'n and Morn.
Nor past uncelebrated, nor unsung
By the Celestial Quires, when Orient Light
Exhaling first from Darkness they beheld;
Birth-day of Heav'n and Earth; with joy and shout
The hollow universal Orb they fill'd.*

WE have the same Elevation of Thought in the third Day; when the Mountains were brought forth, and the Deep was made.

*Immediately the Mountains huge appear
Emergent, and their broad bare backs up-heave
Into the Clouds, their tops ascend the Sky:
So high as heav'd the tumid hills, so low
Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
Capacious bed of Waters——*

WE have also the Rising of the whole vegetable World describ'd in this Day's Work, which is filled with all the Graces that other Poets have lavished on their Description of the Spring, and leads the Reader's Imagination into a Theatre equally surprizing and beautiful.

THE

THE several Glories of the Heavens make their Appearance on the fourth Day.

*First in his east the glorious lamp was seen
Regent of day, and all the Horizon round
Invested with bright rays jocund to run
His Longitude thro' Heav'n's high road: the Gray
Dawn, and the Pleiades before him danc'd
Shedding sweet influence: less bright the Moon,
But opposite in levell'd West was set,
His Mirror, with full Face borrowing her light
From him, for other light she needed none
In that aspect, and still the distance keeps
Till night; then in the East her turn she shines
Revolv'd on Heav'n's great Axle, and her Reign
With thousand lesser lights dividual holds,
With thousand thousand stars that then appear'd
Spangling the Hemisphere——*

ONE would wonder how the Poet could be so concise in his Description of the Six Days Works, as to comprehend them within the Bounds of an Epifode, and at the same Time so particular, as to give us a lively Idea of them. This is still more remarkable in his Account of the fifth and sixth Days, in which he has drawn out to our View the whole Animal Creation, from the Reptil to the Behemoth. As the Lion and the Leviathan are two of the noblest Productions in the World of living Creatures, the Reader will find a most exquisite Spirit of Poetry in the Account which our Author gives us of them. The Sixth Day concludes with the Formation of Man, upon which the Angel takes occasion, as he did after the Battle in Heaven, to remind Adam of his Obedience, which was the principal Design of this his Visit.

THE Poet afterwards represents the Messiah returning into Heaven, and taking a Survey of his great Work. There is something inexpressibly sublime in this Part of the Poem, where the Author describes that great

great Period of Time, filled with so many glorious Circumstances; when the Heavens and Earth were finished; when the Messiah ascended up in Triumph through the Everlasting Gates; when he looked down with Pleasure upon his new Creation; when every Part of Nature seem'd to rejoice in its Existence; when the Morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for Joy.

*So E-v'n and Morn accomplish'd the Sixth day :
Yet not till the Creator from his Work
Desisting, tho' unwearied, up return'd,
Up to the Heav'n of Heav'ns his high abode,
Thence to behold this now created World
Th' Addition of his Empire; how it shew'd
In prospect from his throne, how good, how fair,
Answering his great Idea. Up he rode
Follow'd with Acclamation and the Sound
Symphonious of ten thousand harps that tuned
Angelic Harmonies: the earth, the air
Resounding, (thou remember'st for thou heard'st)
The Heaven and all the Constellations rung,
The Planets in their Station list'ning stood,
While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.
Open ye everlasting gates, they sung,
Open ye Heav'ns, your living doors, let in
The great Creator from his Work return'd
Magnificent, his six days work, a World.*

I cannot conclude this Book upon the Creation, without mentioning a Poem which has lately appear'd under that Title. The Work was undertaken with so good an Intention, and is executed with so great a Mastery, that it deserves to be looked upon as one of the most useful and noble Productions in our *English* Verse. The Reader cannot but be pleas'd to find the Depths of Philosophy enlivened with all the Charms

Charms of Poetry, and to see so great a Strength of Reason, amidst so beautiful a Redundancy of the Imagination. The Author has shewn us that Design in all the Works of Nature, which necessarily leads us to the Knowledge of its first Cause. In short he has illustrated, by numberless and incontestable Instances, that divine Wisdom which the Son of *Sirach* has so nobly ascribed to the Supreme Being in his Formation of the World, when he tells us, that *He created her, and saw her, and numbered her, and poured her out upon all his Works.*



SPECTATOR, No 345.

*Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacius altæ
Deerat adhuc, et quod dominari in cætera posset.
Natus homo est.*

Ov. Met.

THE Accounts which *Raphael* gives of the Battle of Angels, and the Creation of the World, have in them those Qualifications which the Criticks judge requisite to an Episode. They are nearly related to the principal Action, and have a just Connexion with the Fable.

THE eighth Book opens with a beautiful Description of the Impression which this Discourse of the Archangel made on our first Parent. *Adam* afterwards, by a very natural Curiosity, inquires concerning the Motions of those Celestial Bodies which make the most glorious Appearance among the six Days Works. The Poet here, with a great deal of Art, represents *Eve* as withdrawing from this Part of their Conversation, to Amusements more suitable to her Sex. He well knew that the Episode in this Book, which is filled with

Adam's Account of his Passion and Esteem for Eve, would have been improper for her hearing, and has therefore devised very juit and beautiful Reasons for her retiring.

*So spake our Sire, and by his Count'nance seem'd
 Entring on studious Thoughts abstruse: which Eve
 Perceiving, where she sat retired in sight,
 With lowliness majestick, from her Seat,
 And Grace that won who saw to wish her Stay,
 Rose; and went forth among her Fruits and Flowers
 To visit how they prosper'd, Bud and Bloom,
 Her Nursery: they at her coming sprung,
 And touch'd by her fair Tendance gladlier grew.
 Yet went she not, as not with such Discourse
 Delighted, or not capable her Ear
 Of what was high: Such Pleasure she reserved,
 Adam relating, she sole Auditress;
 Her Husband the Relater she preferr'd
 Before the Angel, and of him to ask
 Chose rather: he, she knew, would intermix
 Grateful Digressions, and solve high Dispute
 With conjugal Caresses: from his Lip
 Not Words alone pleas'd her. O when meet now
 Such Pairs, in Love and mutual Honour join'd!*

THE Angel's returning a doubtful Answer to *Adam's* Enquiries, was not only proper for the moral Reason which the Poet assigns, but because it would have been highly absurd to have given the Sanction of an Archangel to any particular System of Philosophy. The chief Points in the *Ptolemaick* and *Copernican* Hypothesis are described with great Conciseness and Perspicuity, and at the same Time dressed in very pleasing and poetical Images.

ADAM, to detain the Angel, enters afterwards upon his own History, and relates to him the Circumstances in which he found himself upon his Creation; as also his Conversation

versation with his Maker, and his first meeting with Eve. There is no Part of the Poem more apt to raise the Attention of the Reader, than this Discourse of our great Ancestor; as nothing can be more surprising and delightful to us, than to hear the Sentiments that arose in the first Man while he was yet new and fresh from the Hands of his Creator. The Poet has interwoven every Thing which is delivered upon this Subject in Holy Writ with so many beautiful Imaginations of his own, that nothing can be conceived more just and natural than this whole Episode. As our Author knew this Subject could not but be agreeable to his Reader, he would not throw it into the Relation of the six days Works, but reserved it for a distinct Episode, that he might have an Opportunity of expatiating upon it more at large. Before I enter on this Part of the Poem, I cannot but take notice of two shining Passages in the Dialogue between Adam and the Angel. The first is that wherein our Ancestor gives an account of the Pleasure he took in conversing with him, which contains a very noble Moral.

*For while I sit with thee, I seem in Heav'n,
And sweeter thy Discourse is to my Ear
Than Fruits of Palm-tree pleasantest to Thirst
And Hunger, both from Labour at the Hour
Of sweet Repast; they satiate, and soon fill,
Tho' pleasant; but thy Words with Grace divine
Imbu'd, bring to their Sweetness no Satiety.*

THE other I shall mention is that in which the Angel gives a Reason why he should be glad to hear the Story Adam was about to relate.

*For I that Day was absent, as beset,
Bound on a Voyage uncouth and obscure;
Far on Excursion towards the Gates of Hell,
Squar'd in full Legion (such command we had)
To see that none thence issued forth a Spy,*

*Or Enemy, while God was in his Work,
Lest he incens'd at such Eruption bold,
Destruction with Creation might have mix'd.*

THERE is no Question but our Poet drew the Image in what follows from that in *Virgil's* Sixth Book, where *Aeneas* and the *Sibyl* stand before the Adamantine Gates, which are there described as shut upon the Place of Torments, and listen to the Groans, the Clank of Chains, and the Noise of Iron Whips, that were heard in those Regions of Pain and Sorrow.

——— *Fast we found, fast shut
The dismal Gates, and barricado'd strong;
But long ere our Approaching heard within
Noise, other than the Sound of Dance or Song,
Torment, and loud Lament, and furious Rage.*

ADAM then proceeds to give an Account of his Condition and Sentiments immediately after his Creation. How agreeably does he represent the Posture in which he found himself, the delightful Landsc'p that surrounded him, and the Gladness of Heart which grew up in him on that Occasion.

——— *As new waked from soundest Sleep,
Soft on the flow'ry Herb I found me laid
In balmy Sweat, which with his Beams the Sun
Soon dried, and on the reaking Moisture fed.
Straight towards Heav'n my wond'ring Eyes I turn'd,
And gazed awhile the ample Sky, 'till rais'd
By quick instinctive Motion up I sprung,
As thitherward endeavouring, and upright
Stood on my Feet: About me round I saw
Hill, Dale, and shady Woods, and sunny Plains,
And liquid lapse of murmuring Streams; by these*

Crea-

*Creatures that liv'd, and mov'd, and walk'd, or flew,
Birds on the Branches warbling; all things smil'd:
With Fragrance, and with Joy my Heart o'erflow'd.*

ADAM is afterwards describ'd as surpris'd at his own Existence, and taking a Survey of himself, and of all the Works of Nature. He likewise is represented as discovering by the Light of Reason, that he and every Thing about him must have been the Effect of some Being infinitely good and powerful, and that this Being had a Right to his Worship and Adoration. His first Address to the Sun, and to those Parts of the Creation which made the most distinguished Figure, is very natural and amusing to the Imagination.

*Thou Son, said I, fair Light,
And thou enlighten'd Earth, so fresh and gay,
Ye Hills and Dales, ye Rivers, Woods and Plains,
And ye that live and move, fair Creatures tell,
Tell if you saw, how came I thus, how here?*

HIS next Sentiment, when upon his first going to sleep he fancies himself losing his Existence, and falling away into nothing, can never be sufficiently admired. His Dream, in which he still preserves the Consciousness of his Existence, together with his Removal into the Garden which was prepared for his Reception, are also Circumstances finely imaged, and grounded upon what is delivered in sacred Story.

THESE and the like wonderful Incidents in this Part of the Work, have in them all the Beauties of Novelty, at the same time that they have all the Graces of Nature. They are such as none but a great Genius could have thought of, though, upon the Perusal of them, they seem to rise of themselves from the Subject of which he treats. In a Word, though

they are natural they are not obvious, which is the true Character of all fine Writing.

THE Impression which the Interdiction of the Tree of Life left in the Mind of our first Parent, is describ'd with great Strength and Judgment; as the Image of the several Beasts and Birds passing in Review before him is very beautiful and lively.

————— *Each Bird and Beast behold
Approaching two and two, these cowering low
With Blandishment; each Bird stoop'd on his Wing:
I nam'd them as they pass'd* —————

ADAM, in the next place, describes a Conference which he held with his Maker upon the Subject of Solitude. The Poet here represents the supreme Being, as making an Essay of his own Work, and putting to the Trial that reasoning Faculty, with which he had endued his Creature. Adam urges, in this divine Colloquy, the Impossibility of his being happy, tho' he was the Inhabitant of *Paradise*, and Lord of the whole Creation, without the Conversation and Society of some rational Creature, who should partake those Blessings with him. This Dialogue, which is supported chiefly by the Beauty of the Thoughts, without other poetical Ornaments, is as fine a Part as any in the whole Poem: The more the Reader examines the Justness and Delicacy of his Sentiments, the more he will find himself pleas'd with it. The Poet has wonderfully preserv'd the Character of Majesty and Condescension in the Creator, and at the same Time that of Humility and Adoration in the Creature, as particularly in the following Lines:

*Thus I presumptuous; and the Vision bright,
As with a Smile more brightned, thus reply'd, &c.
————— I with leave of Speech implor'd,
And humble Deprecation thus reply'd:*

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*Let not my Words offend thee, Heav'nly Power,
My Maker, be propitious while I speak, &c.*

ADAM then proceeds to give an account of his second Sleep, and of the Dream in which he beheld the Formation of Eve. The new Passion that was awaken'd in him at the sight of her, is touch'd very finely.

*Under his forming Hands a Creature grew,
Manlike, but diff'rent Sex: so lovely fair,
That what seem'd fair in all the World, seem'd now
Mean, or in her summ'd up, in her contain'd,
And in her Looks; which from that time infus'd
Sweetness into my Heart, unfelt before:
And into all things from her Air inspir'd
The Spirit of Love and amorous Delight.*

ADAM's Distress upon losing sight of this beautiful Phantom, with his Exclamations of Joy and Gratitude at the Discovery of a real Creature, who resembled the Apparition which had been presented to him in his Dream; the Approaches he makes to her, and his Manner of Courtship; are all laid together in a most exquisite Propriety of Sentiments.

THO' this Part of the Poem is work'd up with great Warmth and Spirit, the Love which is described in it is every way suitable to a State of Innocence. If the Reader compares the Description which Adam here gives of his leading Eve to the Nuptial Bower, with that which Mr. Dryden has made on the same Occasion in a Scene of his *Fall of Man*, he will be sensible of the great Care which Milton took to avoid all Thoughts on so delicate a Subject, that might be offensive to Religion or Good-manners. The Sentiments are chaste, but not cold, and convey to the Mind Ideas of the most transporting Passion, and of the greatest Purity. What a noble Mixture of Rapture and Innocence has the Author

thor join'd together, in the Reflexion which *Adam* makes on the Pleasures of Love, compared to those of Sense.

*Thus have I told thee all my State, and brought
My Story to the sum of earthly Bliss,
Which I enjoy; and must confess to find
In all things else Delight indeed, but such
As us'd or not, works in the Mind no Change
Nor vehement Desires; these Delicacies
I mean of Taste, Sight, Smell, Herbs, Fruits, and Flowers,
Walks, and the Melody of Birds: but here
Far otherwise, transported I behold,
Transported touch; here Passion first I felt,
Commotion strange! in all Enjoyments else
Superiour and unmov'd, here only weak
Against the Charm of Beauty's pow'rful Glance,
Or Nature fail'd in me, and left some Part
Not proof enough such Object to sustain;
Or from my Side subducting, took perhaps
More than enough; at least on her bestow'd
Too much of Ornament in outward shew
Elaborate, of inward less exact.*

*When I approach
Her Loveliness, so absolute she seems
And in herself compleat, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best:
All higher Knowledge in her Presence falls
Degraded: Wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discountenanc'd, and like Folly shews;
Authority and Reason on her wait,
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally, and to consummate all,
Greatness of Mind, and Nobleness their Seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an Awe
About her, as a Guard angelick plac'd.*

THESE

THESE Sentiments of Love, in our first Parent, gave the Angel such an Insight into human Nature; that he seems apprehensive of the Evils which might befall the Species in general, as well as *Adam* in particular, from the Excess of this Passion. He therefore fortifies him against it by timely Admonitions; which very artfully prepare the Mind of the Reader for the Occurrences of the next Book, where the Weakness, of which *Adam* here gives such distant Discoveries, brings about that fatal Event which is the Subject of the Poem. His Discourse, which follows the gentle Rebuke he receiv'd from the Angel, shews that his Love, however violent it might appear, was still founded in Reason, and consequently not improper for *Paradise*.

*Neither her outside Form so fair, nor ought
In Procreation common to all kinds,
(Tho' higher of the genial Bed by far,
And with mysterious reverence I deem)
So much delights me as those graceful acts,
Those thousand decencies that daily flow
From all her words and actions mixt with love
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
Union of Mind, or in us both one Soul;
Harmony to behold in wedded pair.*

ADAM's Speech, at parting with the Angel, has in it a Deference and Gratitude agreeable to an inferior Nature, and at the same Time a certain Dignity and Greatness suitable to the Father of Mankind in his State of Innocence.



SPECTATOR, No 351.

— *In te omnis domus inclinata recumbit.* Virg.

IF we look into the three great Heroic Poems which have appear'd in the World, we may observe that they are built upon very slight Foundations. *Homer* liv'd near 300 Years after the *Trojan War*, and, as the Writing of History was not then in use among the *Greeks*, we may very well suppose, that the Tradition of *Achilles* and *Ulysses* had brought down but very few Particulars to his Knowledge, tho' there is no Question but he has wrought into his two Poems such of their remarkable Adventures as were still talk'd of among his Contemporaries.

THE Story of *Aeneas*, on which *Virgil* founded his Poem, was likewise very bare of Circumstances, and by that Means afforded him an Opportunity of embellishing it with Fiction, and giving a full Range to his own Invention. We find, however, that he has interwoven, in the Course of his Fable, the principal Particulars, which were generally believed among the *Romans*, of *Aeneas* his Voyage and Settlements in *Italy*.

THE Reader may find an Abridgment of the whole Story as collected out of the ancient Historians, and as it was received among the *Romans*, in *Dionysius Halicarnassensis*.

SINCE none of the Criticks have considered *Virgil's* Fable, with relation to this History of *Aeneas*; it may not, perhaps, be amiss to examine it in this Light, so far as regards my present Purpose. Whoever looks into the Abridgment above-mentioned, will find that the Character of *Aeneas* is filled with Piety to the

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the Gods, and a superstitious Observation of Prodigies, Oracles, and Predictions. *Virgil* has not only preserved this Character in the Person of *Aeneas*, but has given a Place in his Poem to those particular Prophecies which he found recorded of him in History and Tradition. The Poet took the Matters of Fact as they came down to him, and circumstanced them after his own Manner, to make them appear the more natural, agreeable, or surprizing. I believe very many Readers have been shocked at that ludicrous Prophecy, which one of the *Harpeys* pronounces to the *Trojans* in the Third Book, namely, that before they had built their intended City, they should be reduced by Hunger to eat their very Tables. But, when they hear that this was one of the Circumstances that had been transmitted to the *Romans* in the History of *Aeneas*, they will think the Poet did very well in taking notice of it. The Historian above-mentioned acquaints us, a Prophetess had foretold *Aeneas*, that he should take his Voyage Westward, till his Companions should eat their Tables; and that accordingly upon his landing in *Italy*, as they were eating their Flesh upon Cakes of Bread, for want of other Conveniencies, they afterwards fed on the Cakes themselves; upon which one of the Company said merrily, *We are eating our Tables*. They immediately took the Hint, says the Historian, and concluded the Prophecy to be fulfilled. As *Virgil* did not think it proper to omit so material a Particular in the History of *Aeneas*, it may be worth while to consider with how much Judgment he has qualified it, and taken off every thing that might have appeared improper for a Passage in an Heroic Poem. The Prophetess who foretells it is an hungry *Harpy*, as the Person who discovers it is young *Ascanius*.

Heus etiam mensas consumimus inquit Iulus!

SUCH an Observation, which is beautiful in the Mouth of a Boy, would have been ridiculous from
any

any other of the Company. I am apt to think that the changing of the *Trojan* Fleet into Water-Nymphs, which is the most violent Machine in the whole *Æneid*, and has given Offence to several Criticks, may be accounted for the same way. *Virgil* himself, before he begins that Relation, premises that what he was going to tell appeared incredible, but that it was justified by Tradition. What further confirms me that this Change of the Fleet was a celebrated Circumstance in the History of *Æneas* is, that *Ovid* has given a Place to the same *Metamorphosis* in his Account of the heathen Mythology.

NONE of the Criticks I have met with having considered the Fable of the *Æneid* in this Light, and taken notice how the Tradition, on which it was founded, authorizes those Parts in it which appear the most exceptionable; I hope the Length of this Reflexion will not make it unacceptable to the curious Part of my Readers.

THE History, which was the Basis of *Milton's* Poem, is still shorter than either that of the *Iliad* or *Æneid*. The Poet has likewise taken care to insert every Circumstance of it in the Body of his Fable. The Ninth Book, which we are here to consider, is raised upon that brief Account in Scripture, wherein we are told that the Serpent was more subtle than any Beast of the Field, that he had tempted the Woman to eat of the forbidden Fruit, that she was overcome by this Temptation, and that *Adam* followed her Example. From these few Particulars *Milton* has formed one of the most entertaining Fables that Invention ever produced. He has disposed of these several Circumstances among so many agreeable and natural Fictions of his own, that his whole Story looks only like a Comment upon sacred Writ, or rather seems to be a full and complete Relation of what the other is only an Epitome. I have insisted the longer on this Consideration, as I look upon the Disposition and Contrivance of the Fable to be the principal Beau-

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ty of the Ninth Book, which has more *Story* in it, and is fuller of Incidents, than any other in the whole Poem. *Satan's* traversing the Globe, and still keeping within the Shadow of the Night, as fearing to be discovered by the Angel of the Sun, who had before detected him, is one of those beautiful Imaginations with which he introduces this his second Series of Adventures. Having examined the Nature of every Creature, and found out one which was the most proper for his Purpose, he again returns to Paradise; and to avoid Discovery, sinks by Night with a River that ran under the Garden, and rises up again through a Fountain that issued from it by the Tree of Life. The Poet, who, as we have before taken Notice, speaks as little as possible in his own Person, and, after the Example of *Homer*, fills every Part of his Work with Manners and Characters, introduces a Soliloquy of this infernal Agent, who was thus restless in the Destruction of Man. He is then describ'd as gliding through the Garden under the Resemblance of a Mist, in order to find out that Creature in which he design'd to tempt our first Parents. This Description has something in it very poetical and surprising.

*So saying, through each Thicket dark or dry
Like a black Mist, low creeping, he held on
His midnight Search, where soonest he might find
The Serpent; him fast sleeping soon he found
In Labyrinth of many a round self-roll'd,
His head the midst, well stor'd with subtle wiles.*

THE Author afterwards gives us a Description of the Morning, which is wonderfully suitable to a Divine Poem, and peculiar to that first Season of Nature: He represents the Earth before it was curst as a great Altar breathing out its Incense from all Parts, and sending up a pleasant Savour to the Nostrils of its Creator; to which he adds a noble Idea of *Adam* and *Eve*,

110 *Notes upon the Twelve Books*

as offering their Morning Worship, and filling up the Universal Consort of Praise and Adoration.

*Now when a sacred Light began to dawn
In Eden on the humid Flowers, that breathed
Their Morning Incense, when all things that breathe
From th' Earth's great Altar send up silent Praise
To the Creator, and his Nostrils fill
With grateful Smell; forth came the human Pair,
And join'd their vocal Worship to the Choir
Of Creatures wanting Voice——*

THE Dispute which follows between our two first Parents, is represented with great Art: It proceeds from a Difference of Judgment, not of Passion, and is managed with Reason, not with Heat: It is such a Dispute as we may suppose might have happened in *Paradise*, had Man continued happy and innocent. There is a great Delicacy in the Moralities which are interspers'd in *Adam's* Discourse, and which the most ordinary Reader cannot but take Notice of. That Force of Love which the Father of Mankind so finely describes in the Eighth Book, and which is inserted in the foregoing Paper, shews it self here in many beautiful Instances; As in those fond Regards he cast towards *Eve* at her parting from him.

*Her long with ardent look his Eye pursued
Delighted, but desiring more her stay.
Oft he to her his Charge of quick Return
Repeated; she to him as oft engaged
To be return'd by Noon amid the Bower.*

IN his Impatience and Amusement during her Absence.

——*Adam the while
Waiting desirous her Return, had weav'd*

of

*Of choicest Flow'rs a Garland to adorn
Her Tresses, and her Royal Labours crown,
As Reapers oft are wont their Harvest Queen.
Great Joy be promised to his Thoughts, and now
Solace in her Return, so long delay'd.*

BUT particularly in that passionate Speech, where seeing her irrecoverably lost, he resolves to perish with her rather than to live without her.

—————*Some cursed Fraud
Or Enemy hath beguil'd thee, yet unknown,
And me with thee hath ruin'd, for with Thee
Certain my Resolution is to Die ;
How can I live without thee, how forego
Thy sweet Converse, and Love so dearly join'd,
To live again in these wild Woods forlorn ?
Should God create another Eve, and I
Another Rib afford, yet loss of thee
Would never from my Heart: no, no, I feel
The link of Nature draw me: Flesh of Flesh,
Bone of my Bone thou art, and from thy State
Mine never shall be parted, Bliss or Woe.*

THE Beginning of this Speech, and the Preparation to it are animated with the same Spirit as the Conclusion, which I have here quoted.

THE several Wiles which are put in Practice by the Tempter, when he found *Eve* separated from her Husband, the many pleasing Images of Nature which are intermixt in this Part of the Story, with its gradual and regular Progress to the fatal Catastrophe, are so very remarkable, that it would be superfluous to point out their respective Beauties.

I have avoided mentioning any particular Similitudes in my Remarks on this great Work, because I have given a general Account of them in my Paper on the

First Book. There is one, however, in this Part of the Poem which I shall here quote, as it is not only very beautiful, but the closest of any in the whole Poem ; I mean that where the Serpent is describ'd as rolling forward in all his Pride, animated by the evil Spirit, and conducting *Eve* to her Destruction, while *Adam* was at too great a Distance from her to give her his Assistance. These several Particulars are all of them wrought into the following Similitude.

—————*Hope elevates, and Joy*
Brightens his Crest ; as when a wand'ring Fire
Compact of unctuous Vapour, which the Night
Condenses, and the Cold invirons round,
Kindled through agitation to a Flame,
(Which oft they say, some evil Spirit attends)
Hovering and blazing with delusive Light,
Misleads the amaz'd Night-wanderer from his way
To Bogs and Mires, and oft thro' Pond or Pool,
There swallow'd up and lost, from Succour far.

THAT secret Intoxication of Pleasure, with all those transient Flushings of Guilt and Joy which the Poet represents in our first Parents upon their eating the forbidden Fruit, to those Flaggings of Spirit, Damps of Sorrow, and mutual Accusations which succeed it, are conceiv'd with a wonderful Imagination, and described in very natural Sentiments.

WHEN *Dido* in the Fourth *Æneid* yielded to that fatal Temptation which ruin'd her, *Virgil* tells us the Earth trembled, the Heavens were filled with Flashes of Lightning, and the Nymphs howled upon the Mountain Tops. *Milton*, in the same poetical Spirit, has describ'd all Nature as disturbed upon *Eve's* eating the forbidden Fruit.

So saying, her rash Hand in evil Hour
Forth reaching to the Fruit, she plucks, she eat :

Earth

*Earth felt the Wound, and Nature from her Seat
Sighing thro' all her Works gave Signs of Woe
That all was lost——*

UPON *Adam's* falling into the same Guilt, the whole Creation appears a second time in Convulsions.

———*He scrupled not to eat
Against his better Knowledge, not deceiv'd,
But fondly overcome with female Charm.
Earth trembled from her Entrails, as again
In Pangs, and Nature gave a second Groan,
Sky lowred, and muttering Thunder, some sad Drops
Wept at completing of the mortal Sin——*

AS all Nature suffer'd by the Guilt of our first Parents, these Symptoms of Trouble and Consternation are wonderfully imagined, not only as Prodigies, but as Marks of her sympathizing in the Fall of Man.

ADAM's Converſe with *Eve*, after having eaten the forbidden Fruit, is an exact Copy of that between *Jupiter* and *Juno* in the Fourteenth *Iliad*. *Juno* there approaches *Jupiter* with the Girdle which ſhe had received from *Venus*; upon which he tells her, that ſhe appeared more charming and deſirable than ſhe had ever done before, even when their Loves were at the higheſt. The Poet afterwards deſcribes them as reſting on a Summit of Mount *Ida*, which produced under them a Bed of Flowers, the *Lotus*, the *Crocus*, and the *Hyacinth*, and concludes his Deſcription with their falling aſleep.

LET the Reader compare this with the following Paſſage in *Milton*, which begins with *Adam's* Speech to *Eve*.

*For never did thy Beauty ſince the Day
I ſaw thee firſt and wedded thee, adorn'd
With all Perfections, ſo inflame my Senſe*

114 *Notes upon the Twelve Books*

*With Ardor to enjoy thee, fairer now
Than ever, bounty of this virtuous Tree.
So said he, and forbore not glance or toy
Of amorous Intent, well understood
Of Eve, whose Eye darted contagious fire.
Her hand he seized, and to a shady bank
Thick over-head with verdant roof embower'd
He led her nothing loath: Flow'rs were the Couch,
Pansies, and Violets, and Asphodel,
And Hyacinth, Earth's freshest softest Lap.
There they their fill of Love, and Love's disport
Took largely, of their mutual guilt the Seal,
The Solace of their Sin, till dewy Sleep
Oppress'd them——*

AS no Poet seems ever to have studied *Homer* more, or to have resembled him in the Greatness of Genius than *Milton*, I think I should have given but a very imperfect Account of his Beauties, if I had not observed the most remarkable Passages which look like Parallels in these two great Authors. I might, in the Course of these Criticisms, have taken Notice of many particular Lines and Expressions which are translated from the *Greek Poet*; but as I thought this would have appeared too minute and over-curious, I have purposely omitted them. The greater Incidents, however, are not only set off by being shewn in the same Light with several of the same Nature in *Homer*, but by that means may be also guarded against the Cavils of the Tasteless or Ignorant.



SPECTATOR, N^o 357.

——— *Quis talia fando*
Temperet à lachrymis? ———

Virg.

THE tenth Book of *Paradise Lost* has a greater Variety of Persons in it than any other in the whole Poem. The Author upon the winding up of his Action introduces all those who had any Concern in it, and shews with great Beauty the Influence which it had upon each of them. It is like the last Act of a well-written Tragedy, in which all who had a Part in it are generally drawn up before the Audience, and represented under those Circumstances in which the Determination of the Action places them.

I shall therefore consider this Book under four Heads, in relation to the Celestial, the Infernal, the Human, and the imaginary Persons, who have their respective Parts allotted in it.

TO begin with the Celestial Persons: The Guardian Angels of *Paradise* are describ'd as returning to Heaven upon the Fall of Man, in order to approve their Vigilance; their Arrival, their Manner of Reception, with the Sorrow which appear'd in themselves, and in those Spirits who are said to rejoice at the Conversion of a Sinner, are very finely laid together in the following Lines.

*Up into Heav'n from Paradise in haste
 Th' angelic guards ascended, mute and sad
 For Man, for of his state by this they knew,
 Much wond'ring how the subtle Fiend had stoln
 Entrance unseen. Soon as th' unwelcome news*

From

*From Earth arriv'd at Heaven Gate, displeas'd
 All were who heard, dim sadness did not spare
 That time Celestial visages, yet mixt
 With pity, violated not their Bliss.
 About the new-arriv'd, in multitudes
 Th' Æthereal People ran, to hear and know
 How all befel: They tow'rd the Throne supreme
 Accountable made haste, to make appear
 With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance,
 And easily approv'd; when the most High
 Eternal Father, from his secret cloud
 Amidst, in thunder utter'd thus his voice.*

THE same Divine Person, who in the foregoing Parts of this Poem interceded for our first Parents before their Fall, overthrew the Rebel Angels, and created the World, is now represented as descending to *Paradise*, and pronouncing Sentence upon the three Offenders. The Cool of the Evening, being a Circumstance with which Holy Writ introduces this great Scene, it is poetically described by our Author, who has also kept religiously to the Form of Words, in which the three several Sentences were pass'd upon *Adam*, *Eve*, and the *Serpent*. He has rather chosen to neglect the Numerousness of his Verse, than to deviate from those Speeches which are recorded on this great Occasion. The Guilt and Confusion of our first Parents standing naked before their Judge, is touched with great Beauty. Upon the Arrival of Sin and Death into the Works of the Creation, the Almighty is again introduced as speaking to his Angels that surrounded him.

*See! with what heat these Dogs of Hell advance,
 To waste and harvock yonder World, which I
 So fair and good created; &c.*

THE

THE following Passage is form'd upon that glorious Image in Holy Writ, which compares the Voice of an innumerable Host of Angels, uttering Hallelujahs, to the Voice of mighty Thunderings, or of many Waters.

*He ended, and the Heav'nly Audience loud
Sung Hallelujah, as the Sound of Seas,
Through multitude that sung: "Just are thy Ways,
" Righteous are thy Decrees in all thy Works,
" Who can extenuate Thee?——"*

THOUGH the Author in the whole Course of his Poem, and particularly in the Book we are now examining, has infinite Allusions to Places of Scripture, I have only taken notice in my Remarks of such as are of a poetical Nature, and which are woven with great Beauty into the Body of this Fable. Of this kind is that Passage in the present Book, where describing Sin and Death as marching thro' the Works of Nature, he adds,

*———Behind her Death
Close following pace for pace, not mounted yet
On his pale Horse——*

Which alludes to that Passage in Scripture so wonderfully poetical, and terrifying to the Imagination. *And I look'd and behold a pale Horse, and his Name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him: and Power was given unto them over the fourth Part of the Earth, to kill with Sword, and with Hunger, and with Sicknes, and with the Beasts of the Earth.* Under this first Head of Celestial Persons we must likewise take Notice of the Command which the Angels receiv'd, to produce the several Changes in Nature, and fully the Beauty of the Creation. Accordingly they are represented as infecting the Stars and Planets with malignant Influences, weakning the Light of the Sun, bringing down the Winter into the milder Regions of Nature, planting
Winds

Winds and Storms in several Quarters of the Sky, storing the Clouds with Thunder, and in short, perverting the whole Frame of the Universe to the Condition of its criminal Inhabitants. As this is a noble Incident in the Poem, the following Lines, in which we see the Angels heaving up the Earth, and placing it in a different Posture to the Sun from what it had before the Fall of Man, is conceived with that sublime Imagination which was so peculiar to this great Author.

*Some say he bid his Angels turn ascance
The Poles of Earth twice ten Degrees and more
From the Sun's Axle ; they with Labour push'd
Oblique the Centrick Globe——*

WE are in the second place to consider the infernal Agents under the View which *Milton* has given us of them in this Book. It is observed by those who would set forth the Greatness of *Virgil's* Plan, that he conducts his Reader thro' all the Parts of the Earth which were discover'd in his time. *Asia, Africa, and Europe* are the several Scenes of his Fable. The Plan of *Milton's* Poem is of an infinitely greater Extent, and fills the Mind with many more astonishing Circumstances. *Satan*, having surrounded the Earth seven times, departs at length from *Paradise*. We then see him steering his Course among the Constellations, and after having traversed the whole Creation, pursuing his Voyage thro' the *Chaos*, and entering into his own infernal Dominions.

HIS first Appearance in the Assembly of Fallen Angels, is work'd up with Circumstances which give a delightful Surprize to the Reader ; but there is no Incident in the whole Poem which does this more than the Transformation of the whole Audience, that follows the Account their Leader gives them of his Expedition. The gradual Change of *Satan* himself is described after *Ovid's* Manner, and may vie with any of those celebrated Transformations which are looked upon as the most beautiful Parts in that Poet's Works. *Milton* never

fails

fails of improving his own Hints, and bestowing the last finishing Touches to every Incident which is admitted into his Poem. The unexpected Hiss which rises in this Episode, the Dimensions and Bulk of *Satan* so much superior to those of the infernal Spirits who lay under the same Transformation, with the annual Change which they are supposed to suffer, are Instances of this Kind. The Beauty of the Diction is very remarkable in this whole Episode, as I have observed in the sixth Paper of these Remarks the great Judgment with which it was contrived.

THE Parts of *Adam* and *Eve*, or the Humane Persons, come next under our Consideration. *Milton's* Art is no where more shewn than in his conducting the Parts of these our first Parents. The Representation he gives of them, without falsifying the Story, is wonderfully contrived to influence the Reader with Pity and Compassion towards them. Though *Adam* involves the whole Species in Misery, his Crime proceeds from a Weakness which every Man is inclined to pardon and commiserate, as it seems rather the Frailty of Humane Nature, than of the Person who offended. Every one is apt to excuse a Fault which he himself might have fallen into. It was the Excess of Love for *Eve* that ruin'd *Adam* and his Posterity. I need not add, that the Author is justify'd in this Particular by many of the Fathers, and the most orthodox Writers. *Milton* has by this Means fill'd a great Part of his Poem with that Kind of Writing which the *French* Criticks call the *Tender*, and which is in a particular Manner engaging to all Sorts of Readers.

ADAM and *Eve*, in the Book we are now considering, are likewise drawn with such Sentiments as do not only interest the Reader in their Afflictions, but raise in him the most melting Passions of Humanity and Commiseration. When *Adam* sees the several Changes in Nature produced about him, he appears in a Disorder of Mind suitable to one who had forfeited both his Innocence and his Happiness; he is filled with Horror, Remorse,

morse, and Despair; in the Anguish of his Heart he expostulates with his Creator for having given him an unasked Existence.

*Did I request thee, Maker, from my Clay,
To mould me Man? did I solicit thee
From Darknes to promote me? or here place
In this delicious Garden? As my Will
Concurr'd not to my Being, 'twere but right
And equal to reduce me to my Dust,
Desirous to resign, and render back
All I receiv'd—*

HE immediately after recovers from his Presumption, owns his Doom to be just, and begs that the Death which is threatned him may be inflicted on him.

*Why delays
His Hand to execute, what his Decree
Fix'd on this day? Why do I overlive?
Why am I mock'd with Death, and lengthen'd out
To deathless Pain? how gladly would I meet
Mortality my Sentence, and be Earth
Insensible! how glad would lay me down,
As in my Mother's Lap? there shou'd I rest
And sleep secure; his dreadful Voice no more
Would thunder in my Ears: no fear of worse
To me and to my Offspring, would torment me
With cruel Expectation—*

THIS whole Speech is full of the like Emotion, and varied with all those Sentiments which we may suppose natural to a Mind so broken and disturb'd. I must not omit that generous Concern which our first Father shews in it for his Posterity, and which is so proper to affect the Reader.

—Hide

Hide me from the Face
Of God, whom to behold was then my height
Of Happiness; yet well, if here would end
The Misery, I deserv'd it, and would bear
My own Deservings; but this will not serve;
All that I eat, or drink, or shall beget
Is propagated Curse. O Voice once heard
Delightfully, Increase and Multiply;
Now Death to hear! —————

In me all
Posterity stands curst! Fair Patrimony,
That I must leave you, Sons! O were I able
To waste it all myself, and leave you none!
So disinherited, how would you bless
Me now your Curse! Ah, why should all Mankind,
For one Man's Fault, thus guiltless be condemn'd,
If guiltless? But from me what can proceed
But all corrupt —————

WHO can afterwards behold the Father of Mankind
extended upon the Earth, uttering his midnight Com-
plaints, bewailing his Existence, and wishing for Death,
without sympathizing with him in his Distress?

Thus Adam to himself lamented loud,
Thro' the still Night; not now (as ere Man fell)
Wholsom, and cool, and mild, but with black Air
Accompanied, with Damps and dreadful Gloom;
Which to his evil Conscience represented
All things with double Terror. On the Ground
Outstretch'd he lay; on the cold Ground! and oft
Curs'd his Creation; Death as oft accus'd
Of tardy Execution —————

THE Part of *Eve* in this Book is no less passionate, and apt to sway the Reader in her Favour. She is represented with great Tenderness as approaching *Adam*, but is spurn'd from him with a Spirit of Upbraiding and Indignation, conformable to the Nature of Man, whose Passions had now gained the Dominion over him. The following Passage, wherein she is described as renewing her Addresses to him, with the whole Speech that follows it, have something in them exquisitely moving and pathetick.

*He added not, and from her turn'd: But Eve
Not so repuls'd, with Tears that ceas'd not flowing,
And Tresses all disorder'd, at his feet
Fell humble; and embracing them, besought
His Peace, and thus proceeded in her Complaint.*

*For sake me not thus, Adam! Witness Heav'n
What Love sincere and Res'ence in my Heart
I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,
Unhappily deceiv'd! Thy Suppliant
I beg, and clasp thy Knees; bereave me not
(Whereon I live!) thy gentle Looks, thy Aid,
Thy Counsel in this uttermost Distress,
My only Strength, and Stay! Forlorn of thee,
Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?
While yet we live, (scarce one short Hour perhaps)
Between us two let there be peace, &c.*

ADAM's Reconcilement to her is work'd up in the same Spirit of Tenderness. *Eve* afterwards proposes to her Husband, in the Blindness of her Despair, that to prevent their Guilt from descending upon Posterity they should resolve to live Childless; or, if that could not be done, they should seek their own Deaths by violent Methods. As those Sentiments naturally engage the Reader to regard the Mother of Mankind with more than ordinary Commiseration, they likewise contain a very fine Moral. The Resolution of dying to end our Miseries,

Miseries, does not shew such a degree of Magnanimity as a Resolution to bear them, and submit to the Dispensations of Providence. Our Author has therefore, with great Delicacy, represented *Eve* as entertaining this Thought, and *Adam* as disapproving it.

WE are, in the last Place, to consider the imaginary Persons, or *Death* and *Sin*, who act a large Part in this Book. Such beautiful extended Allegories are certainly some of the finest Compositions of Genius; but, as I have before observed, are not agreeable to the Nature of an Heroick Poem. This of *Sin* and *Death* is very exquisite in its Kind, if not considered as a Part of such a Work. The Truths contained in it are so clear and open, that I shall not lose Time in explaining them; but shall only observe, that a Reader who knows the Strength of the *English* Tongue, will be amazed to think how the Poet could find such apt Words and Phrases to describe the Actions of those two imaginary Persons, and particularly in that Part where *Death* is exhibited as forming a Bridge over the *Chaos*; a Work suitable to the Genius of *Milton*.

SINCE the Subject I am upon gives me an Opportunity of speaking more at large of such Shadowy and Imaginary Persons as may be introduced into Heroick Poems, I shall beg Leave to explain myself in a Matter which is curious in its Kind, and which none of the Criticks have treated of. It is certain *Homer* and *Virgil* are full of imaginary Persons, who are very beautiful in Poetry when they are just shewn without being engaged in any Series of Action. *Homer* indeed represents *Sleep* as a Person, and ascribes a short Part to him in his *Iliad*; but we must consider that tho' we now regard such a Person as entirely shadowy and unsubstantial, the Heathens made Statues of him, placed him in their Temples, and looked upon him as a Real Deity. When *Homer* makes use of other such Allegorical Persons, it is only in short Expressions, which convey an ordinary Thought to the Mind in the most pleasing

Manner, and may rather be looked upon as Poetical Phrases than Allegorical Descriptions. Instead of telling us that Men naturally fly when they are terrified, he introduces the Persons of *Flight* and *Fear*, who, he tells us, are inseparable Companions. Instead of saying that the Time was come when *Apollo* ought to have received his Recompence, he tells us that the *Hours* brought him his Reward. Instead of describing the Effects which *Minerva's* *Aegis* produced in Battle, he tells us that the Brims of it were encompassed by *Terror*, *Rout*, *Discord*, *Fury*, *Pursuit*, *Massacre* and *Death*. In the same Figure of speaking, he represents *Victory* as following *Diomedes*; *Discord* as the Mother of Funerals and Mourning; *Venus* as dressed by the *Graces*; *Bellona* as wearing *Terror* and *Consternation* like a Garment. I might give several other Instances out of *Homer*, as well as a great many out of *Virgil*. *Milton* has likewise very often made use of the same way of Speaking, as where he tells us, that *Victory* sat on the Right Hand of the *Messiah* when he marched forth against the Rebel Angels; that the rising of the Sun the *Hours* unbarr'd the Gates of Light; that *Discord* was the Daughter of *Sin*. Of the same Nature are those Expressions, where describing the Singing of the Nightingal, he adds, *Silence was pleased*; and upon the *Messiah's* bidding Peace to the *Chaos*, *Confusion* heard his Voice. I might add innumerable Instances of our Poet's writing in this beautiful Figure. It is plain that these I have mentioned, in which Persons of an imaginary Nature are introduced, are such short Allegories as are not designed to be taken in the literal Sense, but only to convey particular Circumstances to the Reader after an unusual and entertaining Manner. But when such Persons are introduced as principal Actors, and engaged in a Series of Adventures, they take too much upon them, and are by no means proper for an Heroic Poem, which ought to appear credible in its principal Parts. I cannot forbear therefore thinking that *Sin* and *Death* are as improper Agents in a Work of this Nature, as *Strength* and

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and *Necessity* in one of the Tragedies of *Eschylus*, who represented those two Persons nailing down *Prometheus* to a Rock, for which he has been justly censured by the greatest Criticks. I do not know any imaginary Person made use of in a more sublime manner of Thinking than that in one of the Prophets, who describing God as descending from Heaven, and visiting the Sins of Mankind, adds that dreadful Circumstance, *Before him went the Pestilence*. It is certain this imaginary Person might have been described in all her purple Spots. The *Fever* might have marched before her, *Pain* might have stood at her Right Hand, *Phrenzy* on her Left, and *Death* in her Rear. She might have been introduced as gliding down from the Tail of a Comet, or darted upon the Earth in a Flash of Lightning: She might have tainted the Atmosphere with her Breath; the very Glaring of her Eyes might have scattered Infection. But I believe every Reader will think, that in such sublime Writings the mentioning of her as it is done in Scripture, has something in it more just, as well as great, than all that the most fanciful Poet could have bestowed upon her in the Richness of his Imagination.



SPECTATOR, No 363.

— *Crudelis ubique*
Luctus, ubique pavor, & plurima Mortis Imago.
 Virg.

MILTON has shewn a wonderful Art in describing that Variety of Passions which arise in our first Parents upon the Breach of the Commandment
 I. 3. that

that had been given them. We see them gradually passing from the Triumph of their Guilt through Remorse, Shame, Despair, Contrition, Prayer, and Hope, to a perfect and compleat Repentance. At the End of the Tenth Book they are represented as prostrating themselves upon the Ground, and watering the Earth with their Tears: To which the Poet joins this beautiful Circumstance, that they offer'd up their penitential Prayers, on the very Place where their Judge appeared to them when he pronounced their Sentence.

— *They forthwith to the place
Repairing where he judg'd them, prostrate fell
Before him Reverent, and both confess'd
Humbly their Faults, and Pardon begg'd, with Tears
Watering the Ground* —

THERE is a Beauty of the same kind in a Tragedy of *Sophocles*, where *Oedipus*, after having put out his own Eyes, instead of breaking his Neck from the Palace-Battlements (which furnishes so elegant an Entertainment for our *English* Audience) desires that he may be conducted to Mount *Cithæron*, in order to end his Life in that very Place where he was exposed in his Infancy, and where he should then have died, had the Will of his Parents been executed.

AS the Author never fails to give a poetical Turn to his Sentiments, he describes in the Beginning of this Book the Acceptance which these their Prayers met with, in a short Allegory, form'd upon that beautiful Passage in holy Writ: *And another Angel came and stood at the Altar, having a golden Censer; and there was given unto him much Incense, that he should offer it with the Prayers of all Saints upon the golden Altar, which was before the Throne: And the Smoke of the Incense which came with the Prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God.*

——— *To Heav'n their Prayers*
Flew up, nor miss'd the Way, by envious Winds
Blown vagabond or frustrate: in they pass'd
Dimensionless through heav'nly Doors, then clad
With Incense, where the golden Altar smudg'd,
By their great Intercessor, came in sight
Before the Father's Throne ———

WE have the same Thought expressed a second time in the Intercession of the Messiah, which is conceived in very emphatical Sentiments and Expressions.

AMONG the poetical Parts of Scripture, which Milton has so finely wrought into this Part of his Narration, I must not omit that wherein Ezekiel speaking of the Angels who appeared to him in a Vision, adds, that every one had four Faces, and that their whole Bodies, and their Backs, and their Hands, and their Wings, were full of Eyes round about.

——— *The Cohort bright*
Of watchful Cherubim, four Faces each
Had, like a double Janus, all their Shape
Spangled with Eyes ———

THE assembling of all the Angels of Heaven to hear the solemn Decree pass'd upon Man, is represented in very lively Ideas. The Almighty is here describ'd as remembring Mercy in the midst of Judgment, and commanding Michael to deliver his Message in the mildest Terms, lest the Spirit of Man, which was already broken with the Sense of his Guilt and Misery, should fail before him.

——— *Yet lest they faint*
At the sad Sentence rigorously urg'd,
For I behold them sofin'd, and with Tears
Bewailing their Excess, all Terror hide.

THE

THE Conference of *Adam* and *Eve* is full of moving Sentiments. Upon their going abroad after the melancholy Night which they had passed together, they discover the Lion and the Eagle pursuing each of them their Prey towards the Eastern Gates of *Paradise*. There is a double Beauty in this Incident, not only as it presents great and just Omens, which are always agreeable in Poetry, but as it expresses that Enmity which was now produced in the Animal Creation. The Poet, to shew the like Changes in Nature, as well as to grace his Fable with a noble Prodigy represents the Sun in an Eclipse. This particular Incident has likewise a fine Effect upon the Imagination of the Reader, in regard to what follows; for at the same time that the Sun is under an Eclipse, a bright Cloud descends in the Western Quarter of the Heavens, filled with an Host of Angels, and more luminous than the Sun itself. The whole Theatre of Nature is darkened, that this glorious Machine may appear in all its Lustre and Magnificence.

Why in the East

*Darkness ere Day's mid-course, and morning Light
More orient in that Western Cloud that draws
O'er the blue Firmament a radiant White,
And slow descends with something Heav'nly fraught?
He err'd not, for by this the heav'nly Bands
Down from a Sky of Jasper lighted now
In Paradise, and on a Hill made bare;
A glorious Apparition —*

I need not observe how properly this Author, who always suits his Parts to the Actors whom he introduces, has employed *Michael* in the Expulsion of our first Parents from *Paradise*. The Archangel on this occasion neither appears in his proper Shape, nor in that familiar manner with which *Raphael* the sociable Spirit entertained

tained the Father of Mankind before the Fall. His Person, his Port, and Behaviour, are suitable to a Spirit of the highest Rank, and exquisitely describ'd in the following Passage.

————— *Th' Archangel soon drew nigh,
Not in his Shape Celestial; but as Man
Clad to meet Man: over his lucid Arms
A Military Vest of Purple flow'd,
Livelier than Melibœan, or the Grain
Of Sarra, worn by Kings and Heroes old,
In time of Truce: Iris had dipt the Wooff:
His starry Helm, unbuckled, shew'd him prime
In Manhood where Youth ended; by his side,
As in a glistring Zodiack, hung the Sword,
Satan's dire dread, and in his Hand the Spear.
Adam bow'd low; he Kingly from his State
Inclined not, but his coming thus declared.*

Eve's Complaint upon hearing that she was to be removed from the Garden of Paradise, is wonderfully beautiful: The Sentiments are not only proper to the Subject, but have something in them particularly soft and womanish.

*Must I then leave thee, Paradise? thus leave
Thee, native Soil, these happy walks and shades,
Fit haunt of Gods? Where I had hope to spend
Quiet, though sad, the respite of that day
That must be mortal to us both. O flow'rs
That never will in other Climate grow,
My Early visitation and my last
At Even, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first opening Bud, and gave you Names;
Who now shall rear you to the Sun, or rank
Your Tribes, and Water from th' ambrosial Fount?*

Thee,

*Thee, lastly, nuptial Bower, by me adorn'd
 With what to sight or smell was sweet: from thee
 How shall I part, and whither wander down
 Into a lower World, to this obscure
 And wild, how shall we breathe in other Air
 Less pure, accusom'd to Immortal Fruits?*

ADAM's Speech abounds with Thoughts which are equally moving, but of a more masculine and elevated Turn. Nothing can be conceived more sublime and poetical than the following Passage in it.

*This most afflicts me, that departing hence
 As from his Face I shall be bid, deprived
 His blessed Count'nance; here I could frequent,
 With worship, place by place where he vouchsafed
 Presence divine, and to my Sons relate,
 On this Mount he appear'd, under this Tree
 Stood visible, among these Pines his Voice
 I heard, here with him at this Fountain talk'd:
 So many grateful Altars I would rear
 Of grassy Turf, and pile up every Stone
 Of lustre from the Brook, in memory
 Or Monument to Ages, and thereon
 Offer sweet smelling Gums and Fruits and Flower
 In yonder nether World where shall I seek
 His bright Appearances, or Footsteps trace?
 For though I fled him angry, yet recall'd
 To life prolong'd and promised race I now
 Gladly behold though but his utmost Skirts
 Of Glory, and far off his Steps adore.*

THE Angel afterwards leads Adam to the highest Mount of Paradise, and lays before him a whole Hemisphere, as a proper Stage for those Visions which were to be represented on it. I have before observed
 how

how the Plan of *Milton's* Poem is in many Particulars greater than that of the *Iliad* or *Æneid*. *Virgil's* Hero, in the last of these Poems, is entertained with a Sight of all those who are to descend from him; but tho' that Epifode is justly admired as one of the noblest Designs in the whole *Æneid*, every one must allow that this of *Milton* is of a much higher Nature. *Adam's* Vision is not confined to any particular Tribe of Mankind, but extends to the whole Species.

IN this great Review which *Adam* takes of all his Sons and Daughters, the first Objects he is presented with exhibit to him the Story of *Cain* and *Abel*, which is drawn together with much Closeness and Propriety of Expression. That Curiosity and natural Horror which arises in *Adam* at the Sight of the first Dying Man, is touched with great Beauty.

*But have I now seen Death? is this the way
I must return to native Dust? O Sight
Of Terror foul, and ugly to behold,
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!*

THE second Vision sets before him the Image of Death in a great Variety of Appearances. The Angel, to give him a general Idea of those Effects which his Guilt had brought upon his Posterity, places before him a large Hospital, or Lazar-House, filled with Persons lying under all Kinds of mortal Diseases. How finely has the Poet told us, that the sick Persons languished under lingering and incurable Distempers, by an apt and judicious Use of such imaginary Beings as those I mentioned in my last Paper.

*Dire was the tossing, deep the Groans. Despair
Tended the Sick, busy from Couch to Couch;
And over them triumphant Death his Dart
Shook, but delay'd to strike, though oft invoked
With Vows, as their chief Good and final Hope.*

THE

THE Passion which likewise rises in *Adam* on this Occasion is very natural.

*Sight so deform, what Heart of Rock could long
Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,
Tho' not of Woman born; Compassion quell'd
His best of Man, and gave him up to Tears.*

THE Discourse between the Angel and *Adam*, which follows, abounds with noble Morals.

AS there is nothing more delightful in Poetry than a Contrast and Opposition of Incidents, the Author, after this melancholy Prospect of Death and Sickness, raises up a Scene of Mirth, Love, and Jollity. The secret Pleasure that steals into *Adam's* Heart as he is intent upon this Vision, is imagined with great Delicacy. I must not omit the Description of the loose female Troop, who seduced the Sons of God, as they are called in Scripture.

*For that fair female Troop thou saw'st, that seem'd
Of Goddeses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
Yet empty of all Good, wherein consists
Woman's domestick Honour and chief Praise;
Bred only and compleated to the taste
Of lustful Appetence, to sing, to dance,
To dress, and trouble the Tongue, and roll the Eye:
To these that sober Race of Men, whose Lives
Religious, titled them the Sons of God,
Shall yield up all their Virtue, all their Fame
Ignobly, to the Trains and to the Smiles
Of those fair Atheists——*

THE next Vision is of a quite contrary Nature, and filled with the Horrors of War. *Adam* at the Sight of it melts into Tears, and breaks out in that passionate Speech.

———O what are these!
Death's Ministers not Men, who thus deal Death

*Inhumanly to Men, and multiply
Ten Thousandfold the Sin of him who slew
His Brother: for of whom such Massacre
Make they but of their Brethren, Men of Men?*

MILTON, to keep up an agreeable Variety in his Visions, after having rais'd in the Mind of his Reader the several Ideas of Terror which are conformable to the Description of War, passes on to those softer Images of Triumphs and Festivals, in that Vision of Lewdness and Luxury which ushers in the Flood.

AS it is visible that the Poet had his Eye upon Ovid's Account of the universal Deluge, the Reader may observe with how much Judgment he has avoided every Thing that is redundant or puerile in the Latin Poet. We do not here see the Wolf swimming among the Sheep, nor any of those wanton Imaginations, which Seneca found fault with, as unbecoming the great Catastrophe of Nature. If our Poet has imitated that Verse in which Ovid tells us that there was nothing but Sea, and that this Sea had no Shore to it, he has not set the Thought in such a Light as to incur the Censure which Criticks have pass'd upon it. The latter Part of that Verse in Ovid is idle and superfluous, but just and beautiful in Milton.

*Et tamque mare & tellus nullum discrimen habebant,
Nil nisi pontus erat, deerant quoque littora ponto.* Ovid.

—————Sea cover'd Sea,
Sea without Shore—————

Milton.

IN Milton the former Part of the Description does not forestal the latter. How much more great and solemn on this Occasion is that which follows in our English Poet,

—————And in their Palaces
*Where Lux'ry late reign'd, Sea-Monsters whelp'd
And stail'd*—————

M

than

than that in *Ovid*, where we are told that the Sea-calfs lay in those Places where the Goats were us'd to browse? The Reader may find several other parallel Passages in the *Latin* and *English* Description of the Deluge, wherein our Poet has visibly the Advantage. The Sky's being over-charged with Clouds, the descending of the Rains, the rising of the Seas, and the Appearance of the Rainbow, are such Descriptions as every one must take Notice of. The Circumstance relating to *Paradise* is so finely imagined, and suitable to the Opinions of many learned Authors, that I cannot forbear giving it a Place in this Paper.

—————*Then shall this Mount*
Of Paradise by might of Waves be mov'd
Out of his Place, push'd by the borned Flood;
With all his Verdure spoil'd, and Trees adrift
Down the great River to the op'ning Gulf,
And there take root; an Island salt and bare,
The haunt of Seals and Orcs and Sea-Mews clang.

THE Transition which the Poet makes from the Vision of the Deluge, to the Concern it occasioned in *Adam*, is exquisitely graceful, and copied after *Virgil*, though the first Thought it introduces is rather in the Spirit of *Ovid*.

How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold
The End of all thy Offspring, End so sad,
Depopulation: thee another Flood,
Of Tears and Sorrow a Flood, thee also drown'd,
And sunk thee as thy Sons; 'till gently rear'd
By th' Angel, on thy Feet thou stoodst at last,
Tho' comfortless, as when a Father mourns
His Children, all in view destroy'd at once.

I have been the more particular in my Quotations out of the Eleventh Book of *Paradise Lost*, because it is
not

not generally reckoned among the most shining Books of this Poem; for which Reason the Reader might be apt to overlook those many Passages in it which deserve our Admiration. The eleventh and twelfth are indeed built upon that single Circumstance of the Removal of our first Parents from *Paradise*; but tho' this is not in it self so great a Subject as that in most of the foregoing Books, it is extended and diversified with so many surprising Incidents and pleasing Episodes, that these two last Books can by no Means be looked upon as unequal Parts of this Divine Poem. I must further add, that had not *Milton* represented our first Parents as driven out of *Paradise*, his Fall of Man would not have been complete, and consequently his Action would have been imperfect.



SPECTATOR, No 369.

*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus*—— Hor.

MILTON after having represented in Vision the History of Mankind to the first great Period of Nature, dispatches the remaining Part of it in Narration. He has devised a very handsome Reason for the Angel's proceeding with *Adam* after this manner; though doubtless the true Reason was the Difficulty which the Poet would have found to have shadowed out so mix'd and complicated a Story in visible Objects. I could wish, however, that the Author had done it, whatever Pains it might have cost him. To give my Opinion freely, I think that the exhibiting Part of the History of Mankind in Vision, and Part in Narrative, is as if an History-Painter should put in Colours one half of his Subject, and write down the remaining

remaining Part of it. If *Milton's* Poem flags any where, it is in this Narration, where in some Places the Author has been so attentive to his Divinity, that he has neglected his Poetry. The Narration, however, rises very happily, on several Occasions, where the Subject is capable of poetical Ornaments, as particularly in the Confusion which he describes among the Builders of *Babel*, and in his short Sketch of the Plagues of *Ægypt*. The Storm of Hail and Fire, with the Darknes that overspread the Land for three Days, are described with great Strength. The beautiful Passage which follows, is raised upon noble Hints in Scripture.

—————*Thus with ten wounds*
The River-Dragon tamed at length submits
To let his Sojourners depart, and oft
Humbles his stubborn Heart; but still as Ice
More harden'd after thaw: till in his rage
Pursuing whom he late dismiss'd, the Sea
Swallows him with his host, but them lets pass
As on dry land between two Crystal walls,
Aw'd by the rod of Moses, so to stand
Divided—————

THE *River-Dragon* is an Allusion to the Crocodile, which inhabits the *Nile*, from whence *Ægypt* derives her Plenty. This Allusion is taken from that sublime Passage in *Ezekiel*; *Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against thee Pharaoh King of Ægypt, the great Dragon that lieth in the midst of his Rivers, which hath said, My River is mine own, and I have made it for my self. Milton* has given us another very noble and poetical Image in the same Description, which is copied almost Word for Word out of the History of *Moses*.

All night he will pursue, but his approach
Darkness defends between till morning watch;
'Then thro' the fiery Pillar and the Cloud

God

God looking forth, will trouble all his host,
And craze their Chariot-Wheels: *When by command*
Moses once more his potent rod extends
Over the Sea; the Sea his Rod obeys;
On their Embattel'd ranks the waves return
And overwhelm their War: —

AS the principal Design of this *Episode* was to give Adam an Idea of the Holy Person, who was to reinstate Human Nature in that Happiness and Perfection from which it had fallen, the Poet confines himself to the Line of *Abram*, from whence the *Messiah* was to descend. The Angel is described as seeing the Patriarch actually travelling towards the *Land of Promise*, which gives a particular Liveliness to this Part of the Narration.

I see him, but thou canst not, with what Faith
He leaves his Gods, his Friends, his native Soil
Ur of Chaldæa, passing now the Ford
To Haran, after him a cumbrous train
Of Herds and Flocks and numerous servitude;
Not wandering poor, but trusting all his Wealth
With God who call'd him, in a Land unknown.
Canaan he now attains, I see his Tents
Pitch'd about Sechem, and the neighbouring Plain:
Of Moreh, there by promise he receives
Gift to his progeny of all that Land,
From Hamath Northward to the desert South,
(Things by their names I call, though yet unnamed.)

AS *Virgil's* Vision in the sixth *Æneid* probably gave Milton the Hint of this whole *Episode*, the last Line is a Translation of that Verse where *Anchises* mentions the Name of Places, which they were to bear hereafter.

Hæc tum nomina erunt, nunc sunt sine nomine terræ.

THE Poet has very finely represented the Joy and Gladness of Heart which rises in Adam upon his Discovery

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very of the *Messiah*. As he sees his Day at a Distance through Types and Shadows, he rejoices in it; but when he finds the Redemption of Man compleated, and *Paradise* again renewed, he breaks forth in Rapture and Transport;

*O Goodness infinite, Goodness immense!
That all this Good of Evil shall produce, &c.*

I have hinted in my sixth Paper on *Milton*, that an Heroick Poem, according to the Opinion of the best Criticks, ought to end happily, and leave the Mind of the Reader, after having conducted it through many Doubts and Fears, Sorrows and Disquietudes, in a State of Tranquillity and Satisfaction. *Milton's* Fable, which had so many other Qualifications to recommend it, was deficient in this Particular. It is here therefore, that the Poet has shewn a most exquisite Judgment, as well as the finest Invention, by finding out a Method to supply this natural Defect in his Subject. Accordingly he leaves the Adversary of Mankind, in the last View which he gives us of him, under the lowest State of Mortification and Disappointment. We see him chewing Ashes, grovelling in the Dust, and loaden with supernumerary Pains and Torments. On the contrary, our two first Parents are comforted by Dreams and Visions, cheered with Promises of Salvation, and, in a manner, raised to a greater Happiness than that which they had forfeited: In short, *Satan* is represented miserable in the Height of his Triumphs, and *Adam* triumphant in the Height of Misery.

MILTON's Poem ends very nobly. The last Speeches of *Adam* and the Arch-Angel are full of Moral and Instructive Sentiments. The Sleep that fell upon *Eve*, and the Effects it had in quieting the Disorders of her Mind, produces the same Kind of Consolation in the Reader, who cannot peruse the last beautiful Speech, which is ascribed to the Mother of Mankind, without a secret Pleasure and Satisfaction.

*Whence thou return'st, and whither went'st, I know;
For God is also in Sleep; and Dreams advise,
Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
Presaging, since with Sorrow and Heart's distress
Wearied I fell asleep: but now lead on;
In me is no delay: with thee to go
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay
Is to go hence unwillingly; thou to me
Art all things under Heav'n, all Places thou
Who for my wilful Crimes art banish'd hence,
This further Consolation yet secure
I carry hence; though all by me is lost,
Such Favour, I unworthy, am vouchsaf'd,
By me the promised Seed shall all restore.*

THE following Lines, which conclude the Poem, rise in a most glorious Blaze of Poetical Images and Expressions.

HELIODORUS in his *Æthiopicks* acquaints us, that the Motion of the Gods differs from that of Mortals, as the former do not stir their Feet, nor proceed Step by Step, but slide o'er the Surface of the Earth by an uniform Swimming of the whole Body. The Reader may observe with how Poetical a Description Milton has attributed the same kind of Motion to the Angels who were to take Possession of *Paradise*.

*So spake our Mother Eve, and Adam heard
Well pleas'd, but answer'd not; for now too nigh
Th' Arch-Angel stood, and from the other Hill
To their fix'd station, all in bright array
The Cherubim descended; on the Ground
Gliding meteorous, as ev'ning mist
Ris'n from a River, o'er the marsh glides,
And gathers ground fast at the lab'rer's heel
Homeward returning. High in Front advanc'd
The brandish'd Sword of God before them blaz'd
Fierce as a Comet* —————

THE

THE Author helped his Invention in the following Passage, by reflecting on the Behaviour of the Angel, who, in Holy Writ, has the Conduct of Lot and his Family. The Circumstances drawn from that Relation are very gracefully made use of on this Occasion.

*In either hand the hastning Angel caught
Our ling'ring Parents, and to the Eastern gate
Led them direct; and down the Cliff as fast
To the subjected plain: then disappear'd.
They looking back, &c.*

THE Scene which our first Parents are surprized with upon their looking back on *Paradise*, wonderfully strikes the Reader's Imagination, as nothing can be more natural than the Tears they shed on that Occasion.

*They looking back, all th' Eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy Seat,
Wav'd over by that flaming brand, the gate
With dreadful faces throng'd and fiery Arms:
Some natural tears they dropp'd, but wiped them soon.
The world was all before them, where to chuse
Their place of rest, and Providence their Guide.*

IF I might presume to offer at the smallest Alteration in this Divine Work, I should think the Poem would end better with the Passage here quoted, than with the two Verses which follow.

*They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.*

THESE two Verses, though they have their Beauty, fall very much below the foregoing Passage, and renew in the Mind of the Reader that Anguish which was pretty well laid by that Consideration.

The

*The World was all before them, where to chuse
Their place of rest, and Providence their Guide.*

THE Number of Books in *Paradise Lost* is equal to those of the *Aeneid*. Our Author in his First Edition had divided his Poem into Ten Books, but afterwards broke the Seventh and the Eleventh each of them into two different Books, by the Help of some small Additions. This second Division was made with great Judgment, as any one may see who will be at the pains of examining it. It was not done for the sake of such a Chimerical Beauty as that of resembling *Virgil* in this Particular, but for the more just and regular Disposition of this great Work.

THOSE who have read *Bossu*, and many of the Criticks who have written since his Time, will not pardon me if I do not find out the particular Moral which is inculcated in *Paradise Lost*. Though I can by no means think, with the last-mentioned *French* Author, that an Epic Writer first of all pitches upon a certain Moral, as the Ground-Work and Foundation of his Poem, and afterwards finds out a Story to it: I am, however, of Opinion, that no just Heroic Poem ever was, or can be made, from whence one great Moral may not be deduced. That which reigns in *Milton* is the most universal and most useful that can be imagined; it is in short this, *That Obedience to the Will of God makes Men happy, and that Disobedience makes them miserable*. This is visibly the Moral of the principal Fable which turns upon *Adam* and *Eve*, who continued in *Paradise* while they kept the Command that was given them, and were driven out of it as soon as they had transgressed. This is likewise the Moral of the principal Episode, which shews us how an innumerable Multitude of Angels fell from their State of Bliss, and were cast into Hell upon their Disobedience. Besides this great Moral, which may be looked upon as the Soul of the Fable, there are an Infinity of Under-Morals.

Morals which are to be drawn from the several Parts of the Poem, and which makes this Work more useful and instructive than any other Poem in any Language.

THOSE who have criticized on the *Odyssey*, the *Iliad*, and *Aeneid*, have taken a great deal of Pains to fix the Number of Months or Days contained in the Action of each of those Poems. If any one thinks it worth his while to examine this Particular in *Milton*, he will find that from *Adam's* first Appearance in the fourth Book, to his Expulsion from *Paradise* in the twelfth, the Author reckons ten Days. As for that part of the Action which is described in the three first Books, as it does not pass within the Regions of Nature, I have before observed that it is not subject to any Calculations of Time.

I have now finished my Observations on a Work which does an honour to the *English* Nation. I have taken a general View of it under those four Heads, the Fable, the Characters, the Sentiments, and the Language, and made each of them the Subject of a particular Paper. I have in the next Place spoken of the Censures which our Author may incur under each of these Heads, which I have confined to two Papers, tho' I might have enlarged the Number, if I had been disposed to dwell on so ungrateful a Subject. I believe, however, that the severest Reader will not find any little Fault in Heroick Poetry, which this Author has fallen into, that does not come under one of those Heads among which I have distributed his several Blemishes. After having thus treated at large of *Paradise Lost*, I could not think it sufficient to have celebrated this Poem in the whole, without descending to Particulars. I have therefore bestowed a Paper upon each Book, and endeavoured not only to prove that the Poem is beautiful in general, but to point out its Particular Beauties, and to determine wherein they consist. I have endeavoured to shew how some Passages are beautiful by being

ing Sublime, others by being Soft, others by being Natural; which of them are recommended by the Passion, which by the Moral, which by the Sentiment, and which by the Expression. I have likewise endeavoured to shew how the Genius of the Poet shines by a happy Invention, a distant Allusion, or a judicious Imitation; how he has copied or improved *Homer* or *Virgil*, and raises his own Imaginations by the Use which he has made of several Poetical Passages in Scripture. I might have inserted also several Passages of *Tasso*, which our Author has imitated; but as I do not look upon *Tasso* to be a sufficient Voucher, I would not perplex my Reader with such Quotations, as might do more Honour to the *Italian* than the *English* Poet. In short, I have endeavoured to particularize those innumerable kinds of Beauty, which it would be tedious to recapitulate, but which are essential to Poetry, and which may be met with in the Works of this great Author. Had I thought, at my first engaging in this Design, that it would have led me to so great a length, I believe I should never have entered upon it; but the kind Reception which it has met with among those whose Judgments I have a value for, as well as the uncommon Demands which my Bookseller tells me have been made for these particular Discourses, give me no reason to repent of the Pains I have been at in composing them.

F I N I S.



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